



THE DIVINE LIFE

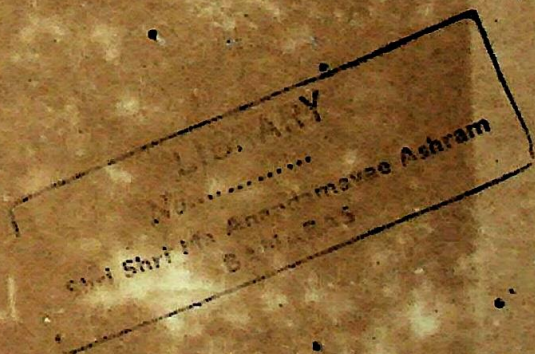
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THE DIVINE LIFE

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No.....

Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram
BANARAS.



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LIFE IN THE DIVINE

DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

Divine consciousness is the consciousness of the eternal and cosmic Reality. It is attained by transcending the human or individual consciousness. It is born of the soul's complete union and absorption in the all-pervading Oversoul. Here the ego notion which binds the soul to a narrow vision is totally absent giving place to an extensive and unlimited vision in which all the visible and invisible worlds are included and absorbed. The individual sense has absolutely no place in this exalted state. The person who has reached this spiritual height, though appearing to possess an individual sense is, in truth, entirely free from it. He lives, moves and acts from the standpoint of the universal and super-universal Reality. He realises the truth that there is only one existence and one power both as the unmanifest and manifest Reality. He feels at all times that he is one with all beings, creatures and things in the world both physically and spiritually. He knows that all movements, changes and activities going on in him and everywhere about him are of one single cosmic power.

What is the nature of actions performed by a person who has attained this supreme state? The same power that activates all things in the universe, is also responsible for the actions of the persons who have attained divine consciousness. The manifestation that

we behold before us is a concrete expression of the divine Shakti. The person of knowledge knows this truth whereas the ignorant one is unaware of it. The knowledge of it enables the former to become not merely a vehicle of the divine power, but also the very embodiment of it. So it is evident that actions are possible in this state. The actions performed by one who has realized the Truth, is a spontaneous outflow from the divine source. Hence even in a life of great activity, the God-realized soul enjoys the bliss of immortality, for the dynamic nature that reveals itself in action is the manifest aspect of the underlying, silent and cosmic Spirit.

Even after reaching this great height of the all-comprehensive vision of the Reality in which all diversity is dissolved, the God-realized soul assumes a position separate from the great Truth. He calls himself, the son, child, servant or devotee of God. Here the duality is assumed, knowing that the devotee and God are truly one. Why this assumption? Because in the sphere of activity the God-realized one prefers to play the part of a lover or servant in order to enjoy the ineffable bliss of love. Love works only on the plane of duality. All his actions, great or small, bear the stamp of love, for love is his being and love is his life, and in love he finds the fulfilment of his existence.

Based upon the realization of his oneness and identity with the supreme Spirit, the devotee still plays the part of a servant or child and acts in all manner of ways as the very incarnation of God. His touch or sight redeems the fallen soul — brings light and happiness where there is darkness and sorrow. He is the real saviour of mankind.

DIVINE JOY

Joy is the aim of all beings and creatures on this earth. Of these a human being alone can know the secret source from which joy of all kinds emanate. In fact even the delight experienced through the senses has its root in this hidden source which we call God, who dwells within us. God is absolute joy, and from Him have projected all the principles of manifestation. Just as to know the seed is to know the tree, so also to know the root cause of the world-manifestation which is God, is to know the nature of the manifestation. We can therefore infer that the universe, being the expression of God, is made up of waves of joy.

If a human being, every part of him, subtle or gross, is a concrete expression of eternal joy — even the momentary pleasures and pains are ripples on the ocean of infinite joy. So, everywhere there is nothing but the forms of joy, because everything is God who is joy.

When the devotee has realized the full splendour of God and is surcharged with ecstasy, and has merged in Him, he cannot contain himself. He dances, being seized with a rare rapture, his entire body thrilling with bliss. The very name and thought of God sets him ablaze, as it were, with this exalted experience. In this state the line of demarcation that divides the devotee and his God disappears and God reveals Himself as the devotee.

Where this supreme joy is at play, there, love rises in floods. Here all diversity and distinctions dissolve into the supreme Spirit, who is the sole Truth and than whom there is none other.

The experience of the devotee in this attainment does not admit of description, as language is utterly

incapable of doing so. He who enjoys it alone knows what it is.

India has presented to the world a galaxy of saints who have reached the heights of such Divine ecstasy mentioned above. All of them are the veritable embodiments of devotion of the highest type. They have poured out the joy of their souls in their songs and teachings. Love is their theme and joy their strain. He who has drunk the nectar, which they yield, has sweetened his life for ever and ever.

DIVINE BEAUTY

Truth is eminently beautiful. All the visible and invisible worlds are the expressions of the Truth; hence loveliness and joy is spread out everywhere. To divinise life is to beautify it.

Truth is not merely silence — a stillness unrelieved and monotonous. Truth is all-comprehensive. It is at once static and dynamic. To emphasise any one aspect of it and say that that is all, is not right. Truth's glory lies in its revelation; hence Truth is love and love is beauty. To realise Truth is to make life unfold its divine loveliness — infuse into every part of it the lustre of grace and excellence. Life now blossoms like a fragrant flower, shedding its sweetness all around. If not this, what is the attainment of Truth worth? Life must come into contact with Truth so intimately that it can fully manifest itself in all its grandeur and glory.

In the name of Truth, looking upon it as something far off from the ken of men, life should not be made to assume a plain, crude and uncouth face. If

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tenderness and forgiveness do not illumine life, if goodwill and sympathy do not inform it, if love does not inspire it, what would it avail if it has all knowledge and gained strange powers? Let your life be a movement of love and beauty and thus be a blessing to all.

It is not philosophy, however high-sounding, that can really sweeten life. It is simple love and joy that elevates, ennobles and liberates it. Meekness and gentleness are the handmaids who wait upon Truth. Calculation, conceit and harshness do not belong to a life imbued with divine beauty.

The votary of Truth, though unassuming and egoless, towers above all those who are vain and presumptuous of their spirituality. His life flows with a sweet murmur, gladdening the heart of everyone who comes to him. His heart throbs with the purest emotion; his head radiates a divine halo; he acts and moves in perennial ecstasy.

Therefore, he who is like unto the child is the rightful heir to the kingdom of eternal beauty and joy. Be therefore cheerful, free, innocent and egoless like a child, if you really wish to comprehend Truth. Open up every nook and corner of your being and eject out all the low passions and conceits that clog the system, and permit the divine splendour and bliss to reveal in you, and transmute your entire being into the very image of Truth. Let divine beauty thrill your heart, flash on your mind and permeate your actions.

There is a rare beauty in sacrifice. Beauty does not consist in talking of the serene depths of your being while making life a distorted and repulsive picture. As you give yourself away selflessly, you unfold, through sheer joy, the beauty of the indwelling Truth. Life is

granted for the fulfilment of this supreme aim. Self-delusion is not realisation of the Divine. It is cleverness, pride and self-centredness that mar the beauty of life.

Imitation has seized the seekers of Truth and it has retarded, if not cut off entirely, their growth and progress. Lipping in the words of great souls is not a sign of genuineness. Dive deep down within yourself and bring out the pearls of your own spiritual experience. Reveal your own light. Be the blazing sun of Truth yourself and beautify your life and that of the world.

COMMUNION WITH THE BELOVED.

What is there sweeter in the world than to hold communion with your Eternal Beloved? He is your never-failing companion and friend. He resides in the inner chamber of your heart and is also present everywhere about you. He is the soul of your soul, the life of your life. In the absolute sense, you and He are one.

If this love of intimate comradeship with your Beloved does not inspire your life, even if you have all other things, your life is lived in vain. See your Beloved in the face of all beings and creatures. Verily, He has become the whole universe. Wherever you turn, there He is. The bliss of His presence is inexpressible. Why run away from Him and seek to attain peace in aloofness? Allow your life to mingle with His life, that is the universal life. He is a calm, serene, changeless Spirit and, at the same time, He is a world player. He dances in the hearts of all beings and creatures. He is at once wisdom, power and love.

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How beautiful are the images in which He appears! He is the essence of all grandeur and majesty. He is the smile on the face of the innocent child and the power that sits on the brow of the king. He is the love that bubbles in the heart of the saint. He is the radiance that shines upon the whole creation. Who can describe His greatness? Why talk of Him in terms of abstract philosophy, while He is the very nectar which you can drink and enjoy? He permeates your physical frame and tingles in every atom of it.

You are wise, you are well-read and you have gone through spiritual practices; you have put on the garb of sanctity, you can preach and you can pose — these are all nothing if you do not experience the blissful union with the Beloved. You can meet Him in the streets, in the bazaar, on the hills, in the cottages of the poor, in the palaces of kings, in hermitages and jungles, in workshops and offices — at all places. He is with you. How sweet, how charming is His constant company! Why do you miss Him? Be humble. Reduce yourself to the very dust of His feet. But dwell in Him and be enchanted by His company. Lay aside your pride. What are you worth if you do not have Him? You may sit on an eminence but without Him you cannot be happy. You may own millions but without His smile beaming on your face you are poor indeed. Enrich your life by His light, love and joy. How sweet and great He is!

Seek the Beloved. Feel His presence. He is thy own Self. Have Him at any cost. Find Him and enjoy eternal felicity. That is why you are here.

LIFE UNVEILED

I look around me — everywhere I find myself revealed in a thousand forms. What glory, what joy in seeing myself as all! What beautiful scenes are unfolded before my eyes! The mountains with emerald verdure spreading over them; the sparkling lake tranquil like my peaceful mind; the grey mist gradually rising and enveloping the mountain, lake and all like the veil of Maya covering the splendour of my soul; how varied and picturesque is my manifestation!

I am a child — child of eternal light and joy. My body thrills to the music of the worlds dancing round each other in space. Ecstasy is my being. Love is the fragrance I shed on all. To my heart clings a million hearts. My eyes behold my Beloved wherever they cast their glance. I look small but I am infinite. My thought embraces the whole universe. I am the child, innocent and pure, that dwells in the hearts of all beings and things. I sleep in some, awake in others and play in waves of delight in some others. I am still — yet I move all the worlds. I am the child of the Eternal — I am the Eternal, I behold myself as all.

I shut my eyes and in the effulgence of the inner light I see countless worlds. I open them and I am all the worlds. In waking I am the cosmic I. In dream the cosmic I, I am. In sleep there is one and that is cosmic I.

You truly love all when you feel one with all. Love is the light of the Spirit. Realise the Spirit and you are filled with love. Get the flower and you have its beauty and fragrance. In colour see harmony, in light see joy — in the outward forms and in depths of things behold yourself — you are the Truth.

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Come one and all — see in me yourself, for I see myself in you all. You are my life, my breath, my soul. You are my forms all. When I love you, I love myself — so do you love me. My seeing is loving — how can I help it? O Beloved ones, you are my own dear Self. I am divorced from myself so that I may love myself. Distance does not obstruct the flow of my love. Love travels quicker than thought — it is the invisible, mystic touch.

Beauteous blossoms of light in charming tints flash through my mind. I gaze on and lose myself in them and become the blossoms. I sense the stillness of the air and the softness that permeates it and I am dissolved. I revel in the glory of my soul and melt away into its supernal ecstasy.

REVEAL YOUR DIVINITY

A complete and comprehensive knowledge and realisation of God can be possible when human life grows towards this state in every part of its being. All the powers of man's intellect, heart and will have to be divinised. In this attainment the entire man becomes a concrete embodiment and expression of the supreme essence and glory of the Divine. His life is now fully permeated with an ecstasy which is simply ineffable. His vision is vast, deep and all-embracing. Apparently, he is a human being like others. But he is re-made into an illumined vehicle for the revealment of universal power, love and joy. He is at once an individual and a cosmic personality. Hence he is looked upon as God Himself and worshipped and adored as such by those who have understood him.

Saints are of this order.

Every man can raise himself to this spiritual height and eminence. In fact, every man is God in reality and in making. Only he has to shuffle off the mask which has made him oblivious of his divine nature. So, God-realisation is nothing but a manifestation of one's own divinity. It is not to unite with a life eternal outside and separate from him. It is an awakening or awareness of his inherent spiritual existence. Sadhana consists in removing the obsession that he is not what he really is.

An intense fire of aspiration lit in the heart of the devotee for the realisation of God, Divine will choose him for the achievement of this goal, and the showering upon him the fulness of divine grace that transmutes the human into the divine, all mean one and the same thing. It is the inner urge and the corresponding divine sanction followed by the flooding into him of the radiance of the Eternal that bring about the great change.

A man may be learned in all the scriptures and have studied all the philosophies. He may have performed severe austerities. All this is of no avail if the redeeming, elevating and transforming power of the Divine within him has not begun its work. All true Sadhakas who are on the divine path, at one stage of their progress, become like furnaces in which the impure metal is freed from its dross, and their life flows out in its pristine spiritual beauty and splendour.

Just as the sculptor reveals a figure of rare charm and grace in a crude stone, so the working of the grace from within brings out the latent potentiality and magnificence of the Spirit. The hidden God asserts and

manifests Himself. This is the truth about God-realisation. A man, understanding the true purpose of his life, should submit himself to this spiritual process of growth and achieve the supreme goal.

• BREAK DOWN BARRIERS

The realization of the highest spiritual life is tantamount to the attainment of equal vision towards all humanity and the resultant love for them all. God is not merely a Reality dwelling above and beyond the creation and the creatures living in it. He is an immanent and all-pervading Truth residing in the hearts of all beings. Hence it is enjoined upon the spiritual aspirant to cultivate love and kindness towards all those who come in his or her contact. The love which the devotee pours out resolves all apparent differences and grants him the experience of the one Spirit which is the substratum of all that exists.

True religion therefore signifies the linking of the individual soul with the Cosmic Soul. The soul does not belong to any caste, creed, race or nationality. Its nature is universal. Inherently it is pure, enlightened, free and blissful. As the aspirant progresses on the divine path, he sheds the ignorance-born sense of diversity founded on traditional and other considerations, and looks upon everybody as the expression of Divinity seated in his own heart.

A man, when born, does not carry any mark or label of his superiority or inferiority over his fellow-beings. He departs this life as he came, shorn of all the appurtenances with which he was clothed during his brief span of life on the earth — such as of wealth,

of learning, of caste, of colour, of status and of culture. He alone has the true spiritual experience who has realised the pristine glory of the Spirit — his true being — and experiences the ineffable joy of union with It.

The object of congregational prayers and Bhajans is to develop broadness of vision and expand the heart so that it may embrace all people as members of a common family. It is the spirit of brotherhood that takes the aspirant nearer God. So long as a human being is obsessed by egoism, thus making him feel that he is an individual separate from the world existence, he lives, as it were, in a mental prison shutting out the light, power, and joy of the Divine. When devotees sing the Name and glories of God together or sit in a prayerful attitude and in meditation of the Supreme Being, they should transcend the physical limitations and rise to the divine ecstasy which dissolves all distinctions and grants them the knowledge of their identity with the Highest.

So in all the inner and outer Sadhanas that they perform, let them see to it that they break down the barriers that prevent them from freely communing with each other in the light of the Spirit. Let them be simple seekers of God and strive to mingle the pure stream of their lives with the ocean of Divine Existence. This is the way to attain the beatitude of a fully illumined, liberated and divinised life.

VICTORY DIVINE

To conquer the lower nature and reveal the glory of the Divine is the purpose of Sadhana. The Sadhaka, before he starts on this enterprise, is a mere tool in the

hands of the ego which dominates and controls him in every way. To destroy the ego-sense is not an easy task. A supreme endeavour backed up by divine grace is necessary. The mind has to be brought into subjection and all the desires vanquished. So the Sadhaka's life is a life of tremendous struggle.

The Sadhaka should, in the first place, be fired with an intense aspiration for his spiritual regeneration and the attainment of the highest goal — God. Then, contact of saints should follow. The ego, having its sway on him, refuses to yield and sets up all kinds of obstacles on his path. It often poses as the Supreme Himself and leads him astray. At the beginning the Sadhaka finds it hard to distinguish the divine guidance from the promptings of the mere mind. The method, by adopting which he can safely progress on the divine path, is to surrender himself entirely to the all-powerful God within him by constantly thinking of Him and His attributes. It is by constant remembrance of Him alone that he develops the needed soul-force to put down the mind and its machinations and rise superior to it. Instead of being the slave of the mind, he should be the master of it.

As the Sadhaka gets more and more into communion with the Divine, the power of the ego diminishes until the ego itself disappears when the full blaze of God-realisation floods his being. It must not be forgotten that, for the Sadhaka, to realise God is to assert his own immortal and divine Self. Just as light dispels darkness, so the divine consciousness destroys the ego-sense. The mind-stuff, which was all along the cause of ignorance and the resultant chaos, should totally cease to exist. It is now that God's mastery in the human

vehicle is evident in all its sublimity. Such a Sadhaka has become one with the supreme Reality and his external life becomes a spontaneous outflow of divine energy, radiance and joy. He becomes the very embodiment of divine Love. The struggle has now ended and victory achieved — a victory over all that is undivine in him — a victory that brings him a state of perfect freedom and bliss.

Whenever violent passions seek to subdue the Sadhaka and cause a sense of frustration and despair in him, he should sit in a prayerful attitude, calm and silent, and take complete refuge in God to escape the blast. Detachment from the mind and constant watchfulness over it is the way to gain control over it. Detachment can be possible only when the heart is attuned with the eternal Self. Heroic spirit and readiness to endure pain, and grit to face failures and defeats, having full confidence in the ultimate success of his quest, should be the qualities of a true Sadhaka. He should cling to God with all his strength, with all his heart and with all his soul. In fact the Sadhaka's triumph is God's own triumph.

The question is asked why God at one stroke does not lift the Sadhaka to the realm of spiritual freedom and peace. He, as an ignorant human being, is a delicate and weak instrument. Before the fullness of the divine illumination can be revealed into it, it has to be, by a steady process, strengthened and made fit in all respects for the great consummation. God's power works in the Sadhaka, who has resigned himself to Him, for a gradual divinisation of every part of his being. The antagonistic influences are now replaced by the suzerainty and all-controlling power of God. In

short, God alone rules supreme in him and absorbs him into His resplendent Being. Now the Sadhaka and God are one and the aim of human life is fulfilled.

THE NEW BIRTH

There is a stage in the evolution of the soul when it takes an upward turn and rapidly marches towards the fullness and perfection of its inherent state of divinity. The soul is essentially divine, and to realise this it should, by a conscious process, return to its native spiritual greatness and glory. When this transformation takes place, the soul experiences a new birth, as it were, since it is imbued with a consciousness whose nature is eternal and infinite. It dawns on the soul that it is not a relative, limited and changing individual but that it is an omnipresent, imperishable and immutable Reality.

Now the soul undergoes such a change in its outlook that its valuation of life and its objects becomes entirely different from what it was before the spiritual enlightenment. Its life thereafter is lived in the terms of the absolute and all its activities are based upon the highest spiritual knowledge and experience.

Such a new birth and consciousness come to every soul in the world. Some may attain this blessed state earlier than others, but all human beings are inevitably progressing towards this ultimate, sublime consummation in their life-journey through the field of time and space.

The spiritual awakening of the soul is nothing but God revealing Himself in the heart. It is His omnipotent will prevailing over His lower nature behind the

mask of which the supreme grandeur of the Divine is hidden. It is by a double process that the soul realises its spiritual sovereignty—God's assertion from within and the vehicle's submission to Him from without. The dominance of the former brings about the complete surrender of the physical, mental and vital aspects. It is like a brilliant light newly lit within a perforated screen permitting its radiance to spread out in all directions, converting even the screen itself into a mass of splendour.

The great Ones, who have reached the summit of divine illumination and knowledge, can alone lead and guide the souls that are struggling on the Path. It is by their power and grace that the aspiring soul is gifted with strength, courage and determination to boldly face all trials and surmount all obstacles on its way to the supreme goal. They inspire by contact, by teaching and by their power. They are like the gardeners who tenderly watch, nourish and take care, in every way, of the growing plant and see that it fulfils its existence by bearing beautiful flower and delicious fruit.

So, to quicken the soul with the longing for the Divine and to cause it to evolve steadily until it realises the fullness of its spiritual glory, the goodwill and blessings of a saint are absolutely necessary. The soul, caught in the toils of its lower nature, hungers for true freedom and happiness. This quest can easily, and in the shortest time possible, be fulfilled when it draws light, inspiration and grace from a saint. Truly, saints are saviours. They are the storehouses of spiritual wealth and they freely give it to those who ask them. To serve them is to have the right and the

power to enter into the realm of immortality. All those who keenly desire for the spiritual unfoldment of their lives and the achievement of true happiness and peace should, in all meekness, approach saints and get illumined in their elevating and transmuting presence.

Now the new birth, the new life and the new consciousness will come to you as God's spontaneous gift and your life will be flooded with divinity inside and out. You are all the sacred and holy temples of God. May He manifest Himself in you and may you by His benediction become His incarnate images!

THE GREATEST GAIN .

Really there is no gain greater than the realisation of God, that is, the attainment of immortal peace and joy. The fact is, your true being and nature are utterly divine and you have only to become aware of it. So there is nothing new you have to obtain by Sadhana but you have only to remove the veil of ignorance by knowing that you are the eternal Self identical with God. When you have thus experienced everlasting peace and bliss, the hankering after the objects of the senses automatically ceases and your life becomes selfless. This is the supreme release of the soul from bondage for which it has been struggling from life after life.

When you dwell in God-consciousness, when your mind, heart, senses and body are filled with divine radiance, when you know that you are the deathless Spirit, one with all existences, and manifest as all that is visible, when your life is gifted with the universal love and vision, whatever be your external condition and

circumstances there is no end to your inner joy and tranquillity. The impact of external things does not disturb you. "You have now risen to a state where the pairs of opposites cannot affect you. This is so because you have achieved a peace and joy the nature of which is eternal and therefore not dependent upon the acquisition of mundane objects.

Hence saints rightly insist upon every human being to walk on the path that leads him to this supreme goal. Man's natural craving for happiness cannot be satisfied until he realises his unity with God. Pursuit after the pleasures of the senses brings disappointment, pain and misery; while the quest for God within takes the soul to the realm of immortal peace and freedom. Fear, doubt, worry and grief now leave him entirely. The mental fever caused by insatiable desires is now abated. Such a life expresses itself in terms of universalism. It rises above the petty and narrow considerations of caste, creed, race and nationality. All sense of diversity disappears in the consciousness of an all-inclusive and all-embracing unity.

Do not therefore still live in your lower nature and clutch at the shadows of life. Do not be harassed by unreal sorrows by becoming a victim to wrath, hate, malice and greed. Reveal your divine existence and diffuse always the rays of love, joy, power and knowledge.

TRUE MISSION OF HUMAN LIFE

Marvellous are the possibilities of human life. You can elevate it to the highest eminence and make it reveal its rare hidden powers to produce works that

can leave a permanent impress upon time." Mainly, there are three functions of human life, namely, thinking, feeling and acting. If you manipulate these functions from your lower nature, they create only discord for yourself and for those round about you, whereas if they are inspired by your higher divine nature, they make for the attainment of a state of harmony conducive to your own felicity and also for the delight of others.

Before the Divine Power takes possession of your life and handles it as It wills for your immortal freedom and for universal beneficence, you should, in the first place, deliver it to that Supreme Power. Just as a well-tuned musical instrument, when played upon by a master musician, brings out a sweet and enthralling melody, so also when God, the Master of beauties and harmonies, manifests in the human being, He blesses it with the gift of a cosmic vision and surcharges it with an all-embracing love.

The main condition for the revealment of God within you is the elimination of your ego-sense and the complete surrender or dedication of every part of your being to the omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient God. Instead of the ego, God should hold sway over you. God's light should illumine your mind. God's love should permeate your heart. God's power should control your activities. In short, you should be so fully imbued with God-consciousness that your life inside and outside is fully divinised and the world is seen by you as the blissful expression of your regenerated life.

All that is good, great and magnificent that you observe in the world which have stood the test of time and have been the wonder and joy of ages, have been

the creations of human lives in whom God had manifested Himself in all His glory and perfection. God has reserved, as it were, His powers for unveiling the exalted qualities of love, sacrifice and service only through human life. Hence, human life has a special mission and significance among the innumerable species of creatures living on the earth. Every member of the human race can become such a vehicle for God to possess and be a sun of divine love and splendour.

The lower human nature is brought under control so that the divine nature may be released and thereafter life may think, feel and act from a new and universalised, eternal vision and experience. There is delight in the progress that you are making to this beatific state, there is bliss in the attainment of it and there is the spontaneous outflow of joy in the life that succeeds it. So, it is rightly said, Sadhaka and Siddha are both He, becoming and being are both His.

Therefore, let your life be made so fit and pure that its hidden mysteries are brought out for the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the world which is to awaken mankind to the awareness of its identity with Him, the one great Lord and Master of the worlds.

BE HERALDS OF THE GREAT EVENT

It is up to you to make your life either harmonious or chaotic. If you attune it with God, the Master of harmonies, and make Him your sole Companion, Guide and Refuge, you will fill it with true beauty, peace and equality. Then, eternal music is produced in you and divine splendour illumines every aspect of your life. On the contrary, if your life is ruled and controlled by

egoism, all the forces within you, mental and physical, will create a state of discord and confusion.

The way is to so adjust your life and conduct as to harmonize it with the cosmic life and activity, which means that you become one with all beings and creatures by developing universal love and vision. Your life is now surcharged with the glory, power and peace divine.

Your individual life should be realised as the expression of the universal life. It must bear the stamp of God upon it. The animal and even the human in you should be totally transformed into the divine life and nature. You have to become the embodiment of immortal love and joy.

Life is intended for attaining this supreme goal. If you choose to remain only in your lower, dark and egoistic nature, you will be a victim to unbridled passions and live in bondage and misery. Therefore, reveal your divinity and make life blessed.

Let not false aspirations arise in your heart and low desires dominate you. Have God, the King of your heart, as your sole inspirer. He is not far away. He dwells within you. Be aware of Him and surrender up your entire being unto Him. You feel His presence within you when your heart is pure, your mind is enlightened and your will coalesces with His will.

When you are thus possessed by the Divine Spirit, you are imbued with His radiance and power for bringing about an atmosphere of peace and goodwill on the earth and for removing all causes that give rise to strife, conflict and war. The fragrance of divine love which now emanates from you is irresistible. You will sweeten your own life and also the lives of others. Your vision

is sublime, as it beholds only Divinity everywhere. The kindly and soothing light of your eyes kindles other hearts and awakens them to the consciousness of God. They are thus made lights unto themselves and lights to all the world.

The world is passing through a period of great travail and agony. They are the signs of a new birth which will bring goodwill, peace and harmony on earth. Let us all be the heralds of this great event. May divine grace pour on the world and cool down the fires of greed and hate, the cause of destructive wars and the resultant widespread devastation, distress and death.

MAN IS EMBODIED DIVINITY

Human life has a great purpose behind it. It is not given to be lived out in ignorance of the divine source from which it springs. When the source is known it flows like a sparkling stream imbued with immortal joy and peace, diffusing its beneficence for all alike. Otherwise, life assumes a dull and monotonous aspect — fitful, erratic and disturbed. It loses its inherent tranquillity and bliss. It is covered by a dark shadow. It feels that it is fettered by innumerable ties. It is like a bird trapped in a cage and struggling for freedom.

True freedom, peace and joy can come only when life realises its universal, eternal and infinite nature. It is the dissolution of the individual ego in the cosmic consciousness — God. It is filling life with divine love and splendour.

It is now that life reveals the glory of God's own

power. It becomes a veritable expression of it. Therefore, it is able to control and guide all other forces in nature. It should not be mistaken that life at a standstill is the true life. Such a life can be compared to a stagnant pool. It is self-centred, self-satisfied and therefore moves in a narrow circle and can never taste the peace of immortality. As the fragrance rises from the incense, as the lustre radiates from a diamond, as the perfume spreads from a flower, so life should manifest its hidden beauty, power, light and joy.

Man is an embodied divinity. He can raise himself to the heights of spiritual eminence. He can experience his absolute and deathless existence. He can make every atom of his manifest life thrill with the divine consciousness. He can know his oneness with the visible nature and invisible worlds. Apparently an individual — still he lives and acts ever in tune with the Infinite.

So let your wisdom be of the Eternal, your love be of the Infinite and your actions bear the stamp of universality. Thus realise the supreme perfection of your life. Verily, you are He.

KNOW GOD AND BE FREE

Moon rises in the heavens and sheds her cooling radiance on the troubled earth. So when God manifests in the heart, He brings light and freedom to the soul in bondage. True freedom is inner freedom — freedom from fear and sorrow. Fear is of death and sorrow is about things that pass away. When God's grace descends, when God's splendour and peace reveals within and illumines the inner and outer life, true liberation comes.

Seek not for this blessed state by external attainments and adjustments. Purify the mind and free it from the fetters of darkness and desire. The crystallised individual sense disappears in the wake of an universal consciousness. Realise the body, senses and intellect are merely vehicles for the expression of Divinity that dwells within. Life is truth immortal. Its nature is eternal bliss and peace. It is one with God.

When the flower blossoms, it shows its inner beauty and gives out its hidden fragrance. So God who lives in and permeates all objects in the world unveils the latent glory, power and joy of His being.

Hence, let the search be for the Reality. Let the aspiration be to realise the highest. Life here is a mere span. Its true significance lies in the way it is utilised. Let it not be identified with and involved in the ephemeral. Let its aim be to reach the supreme state of boundless consciousness and life divine.

Clingings and cravings for things that perish are the cause of man's bondage. Forgetfulness of his real divine nature is responsible for his pain and ignorance. The ego is the dark shadow that shuts out the inner light. Shake off these obsessions and wake up to the awareness of God within you. Know that you are He, and all, all is He. There is only one life, one power, one truth that exists. Knowing this, live, move and act in the world. Then you become a flaming torch of spiritual knowledge and joy.

REAL VICTORY.

There is no greater victory in the life of a human being than victory over the mind. He who has con-

trolled the gusts of passion that arise within him and the violent actions that proceed therefrom is the real hero. All the disturbances in the physical plane are due to chaos and confusion existing in the mind. Therefore, to conquer the mind, through the awareness of the great Truth that pervades all existences, is the key to real success and the consequent harmony and peace in the individual and in the world. Any amount of patch-work on the surface for the attainment of equilibrium and tranquillity can be of no avail. The heart should be purged of its base ambitions for material wealth, fame, possession and power at the expense of others.

Realisation of inner equality founded on the experience of the spiritual oneness of all lives can alone be an abiding basis of external adjustment for the mutual benefit of different individuals and nations. There can be no peace for man until he has attuned his life with the life divine. It is then alone that his hankerings for ephemeral pleasures will cease. His selfishness and greed will be practically eradicated.

Mankind is in the clutches of false aims and aspirations. It holds that material advancement and prosperity achieved by questionable means can conduce towards its welfare and happiness. The spiritual values of life are shoved into the background. They are not only ignored but are also often denied.

The true soldier is he who fights not the external but the internal foes. Man has been gifted by God with immense creative powers. They are intended to build up a new, illumined and elevated life for himself and for others, but we have seen such powers have been abused since they are employed for self-debasement

and destruction of his fellowmen.

So the world should wake up to the consciousness of Divinity residing in the hearts of all beings. True and lasting peace can dawn on the earth only when humanity realises its spiritual unity and equality. Man should learn not to think in terms of separation and isolation such as of community, race, creed and even nation. The ideal of universality should fire the bosom of all people.

By the removal of egoistic self-impositions which have caused clouded and confused thinking, the pristine purity, lustre and glory of the omnipresent Divine are revealed in all their sublimity. Then all will live, move and act in the cooling light of an immanent and transcendent Divine Spirit. The urge for wars, born of insatiable lust for power and status, will be wiped out from the mind of man.

The world war, which has now ended, wrought incalculable havoc. Man, through the latest discoveries of science, has harnessed diabolical forces for wholesale destruction of life and property. This is all due to his subjection to a mind deadened by low desires and enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. God's light, God's grace and God-experience can alone save the world from similar catastrophies in the future.

We are celebrating the days of victory in a wrong way. It is time for peoples, who were engaged in the devastating war, to search their hearts and, by undergoing a discipline of self-purification, flood them with the divine radiance, and thereby free themselves from the evils of exploitation, tyranny and domination with which they are obsessed.

It is evident on all sides that, as a result of the

exhausting and stunning effects of war, humanity is hungering for peace. They have lost faith in all the systems of administration and government obtaining popularity so long. Leaders have been teaching the destructive cult of isolation, distrust and aggrandisement. Now the time has come for spiritual leaders to take the field and teach the way how man can live with man in a spirit of true love and harmony, how wars can be abolished from the earth, how humanity can grow as one common brotherhood, contributing towards its spiritual unity, uplift and enlightenment.

• • Religions should be shorn of all their superstitious accretions and should take their stand on the knowledge of a divine governance of the world from within. The ideas that held sway on the minds of the people, such as caste, creed and race, should dissolve in the awareness of the one all-pervading consciousness and life divine. Equality will then become an actual fact in the mutual relations of the different peoples of the world.

GOD — YOUR COMPANION

Having realised God as the immanent and transcendent Spirit, who has become manifest as all beings, creatures and things, He can still be to you an intimate, ever-present companion, friend and protector. This personal relationship with Him sweetens your life in a marvellous manner. His presence enthuses and guides you at all times. He makes you the vehicle of His infinite love and mercy. He uses you as His instrument for spreading peace and goodwill on the earth. You are one with Him and at the same time you are His free and cheerful servant and pure and radiant child.

You may reach the height of His impersonal nature. You may dissolve your little self in His all-pervading and infinite consciousness. You may behold Him everywhere, but communion with Him as a personal truth and ideal is a rare and exalted experience. Now you can converse with Him, play with Him and be ever joyful in His company.

In this state, you never feel lonely even in the most desolate solitude. You feel His presence not only there but even in the midst of multitudes. He is your never-failing friend. It is strange that He is not a person in the sense in which you see and feel about the forms of beings about you in this world. Both the devotee and his God belong to a realm other than the one which is gross and material.

This eternal Beloved of yours is not only an embodiment of love and joy but also a personification of power. It is for this fellowship, you discard everything else. It can remain unbroken even after you realise your identity with Him by the merging of your separate individuality into His cosmic existence. Before this blessed state is attained, there is the tug-of-war, there is the hide-and-seek, there is the touch-and-go, and the resultant moments of pain, longing and despair. These things are not for you who have achieved the grandest consummation of your spiritual quest by making God as your own — your one true, constant and immortal companion. It is a mystic union, a dual role of the same supreme Truth — at once personal and impersonal.

You look upon Him in various ways, as a friend, a master, a mother, a father, a comrade, a lover and even as a child. Whatever the mode of relationship, the continuous presence and contact with Him brings you a

unique peace and joy compared to which every other delight pales into insignificance.

So the first thing you do in order to know and love God, is to become aware of your kinship with Him. Verily, you are born of Him — a spiritual offspring inheriting the great Originator's nature and qualities. This recognition of relationship with Him through continuous thought and meditation of Him, dissolves the screen that separates you from Him and thereafter you always bask in the sunshine of His Divine Presence and feel that the Beloved is always with you, never losing Him for a moment, ever enveloped by His love and radiance.

GOD ALONE IS REAL

The charm and glory of life manifests when it is tuned with and merged in the great Universal Self who pervades all forms, objects and things. The soul which is imprisoned within the toils of individualism now attains the bliss of perfect freedom. Either on the physical plane or on the spiritual, man's hunger is for freedom. True freedom means real peace and happiness. The spiritual freedom is distinctly superior to the mere physical freedom; because whilst the latter grants man merely a touch of happiness, the former yields everlasting bliss. A man spiritually liberated, though physically bound, has realised eternal happiness, but not the man who is spiritually bound though physically free.

Hence spiritual freedom should be the goal of life if a soul would aspire to enjoy eternal felicity. The soul must lose itself in the infinite Spirit. In such an

absorption the soul identifies itself with that supreme Spirit. In any state, however exalted, in which the identification with the great Spirit is not attained, perfect liberation and pure, everlasting joy are never possible. The absolute, the immortal, the great Reality is ever one. Any existence conceived of as secondary, equal or different from it can only be relative and hence not perfect. The wave and the ocean, the light and the sun are in their essence one and the same, although to the clouded vision they appear to be different. So in the absolute essence of Reality, God, Universe and the individual soul are one.

The upward flight of the soul is always towards this perfect identity with the great One who is the same through and in all. The river of life struggles through all obstacles and conditions to reach the vast and infinite ocean of existence — God. It knows no rest, no freedom and no peace until it mingles with the waters of immortality and delights in the vision of infinity.

SUMMUM BONUM OF LIFE

God-perception or God-experience is the highest acquisition of human life. God is in our very breath. Our eyes behold God everywhere. Our nose smells Him. Our tongue tastes Him. Our ears hear Him and hands touch Him. He lives in our thoughts and feelings and acts. So, every moment we dwell in His all-pervading presence, nay, each one of us is a veritable embodiment of Divinity. There is nothing but He. Without Him, nothing can exist, as with Him everything does.

As the Cosmic Force, it is He who controls every-

thing. It is by His light the sun, the moon and all luminous bodies shine. The worlds and the universes are His self-revelations. When this supreme vision is attained, what words can describe the beauty, power and glory of God?

The chief condition to achieve Him, to realise our perfect identity with Him, and to enjoy eternal bliss and freedom, is to dissolve the individual sense that bars us from attaining this beatific state.

It is the sense of separation from Him that has built the wall between man and Him. This is the veil of Maya or nescience. This separation has to be pulled down. Then the aspirant and God become one. The drop mingling in the ocean becomes ocean itself. The individual realises that He is the Cosmic Truth and Being.

This sublime consummation can be brought about by the easy method of self-surrender. Self-surrender is effected by tuning the mind, which is the cause of producing the illusion of separateness, to the one single thought of God. The heart involved in the attraction and attachment for the objects of the moment should offer all its love and adoration to Him. Life in all its channels should flow for His sake. It should be in all respects permeated, enveloped and inspired through and through by the one consciousness of God.

Again it must be definitely said that this is the *summum bonum* of human life. This is the goal.

LIFE IN GOD IS JOY

Among a certain class of spiritual aspirants it is a belief that religion is associated intimately with a sad

and melancholy attitude, that the sign of true devotion is a long face, sagging lips, knitted forehead, lowered eyebrows and such other manifestations of a deep-seated sorrow. There are, no doubt, moments in the life of the aspirant when his mind sinks into a state of dejection, and sometimes of despair. But such shadows and darkness pass away, giving place to brightness and sunshine. The struggle of an aspirant is heroic in nature. With the aid of prayers and continuous remembrance of God, he battles against the tendencies of his lower nature, which throw obstacles in his path. The mere fact that he is going to meet his supreme Beloved grants him the needed strength and cheer in his endeavour to approach Him. Whenever he meets with failures, he gets over the reaction produced by them on him, by resigning himself to the will of God. Resignation to His will means the release of a divine force, hidden so long in him, which infuses strength and courage into his mind, heart and soul. So the outlook of the true aspirant is optimistic. His eyes see only beauty, goodness and love everywhere. In every happening he discerns the seed of hope and achievement. In this way, he conquers the moods of depression that seek to subdue him. *Satwa guna*, or the quality of light and harmony, is the prominent feature of his life. His face is bright and cheerful. He takes life and all that it brings for him, not seriously. His heart is light. He enjoys a joke and gives himself away to a hearty laugh. After he has met his Beloved, his joy knows no bounds. He lives in perennial ecstasy. He is frank and playful like a child, and creates a jovial atmosphere wherever he is. People who come in touch with him therefore become, like him, free and blissful. God is not a god of sadness,

but He is rightly defined by sages and saints, who have realised Him, as Sat-Chit-Anand — absolute existence, consciousness and *bliss*. Joy is His nature. To strive to reach Him is joy. Every step we put forward in our progress towards Him is joy. To think of him is joy. Even to feel sometimes separate from Him is also joy. All through the thoughts, words and acts, should run an unbroken stream of His remembrance, and this is supreme joy. When you at last reach His feet, and lose yourself in His glorious being, you yourself become joy. Then, where is the place for sorrow, suffering and melancholy? Ramdas would have the aspirant walk the divine path with a nimble step, joy in his heart, cheer and smile on the face, singing sweetly His enchanting name, all the way calling Him as Mother, heart overflowing with love for Him. In this manner, go and have Her Darshan, and be blessed for ever!

SANNYAS AND AFTER

Sannyas, as Ramdas understands it, is a means to an end. It signifies a complete detachment from the objects of the senses and a total indifference to worldly activities. The mind must be free from the hankering for sense pleasures and the body liberated from actions done with a view to gain any fruit or reward. This constitutes renunciation which is essential for fixing our mind on God and God alone.

The life thereafter is lived only for realising Him — to attain the supreme state of perfect peace and joy. Uninterrupted or unbroken communion and contemplation of God alone can enable the soul to know its identity with the Divine. It is only then that the heart

of the seeker will be filled with divine love, compassion and peace.

Life has not only to be illumined in its inner consciousness, but it must also be imbued with divine splendour in all its external expressions and movements. So all disciplines, prayers, meditation and dedication, are gone through with the sole object of transcending the physical and the mental, the animal and the human planes, into the divine plane by the experience of which the soul obtains an all round spiritual achievement. In this illumined state there is neither renunciation of the world, nor the enjoyment of it. The Sannyasin aims at attaining this highest all-comprehensive wisdom and salvation.

The beauty and magnificence of this supreme realisation of God are evident in the life of one who is thoroughly egoless, always absorbed in a supernal light, love and joy, and remains so in all situations and conditions. He is in the world, but not of the world. He acts and at the same time acts not. He identifies himself with all beings and creatures and so his love flows out towards all alike. His eyes are radiant with the vision of Truth and he beholds himself manifest as all objects in the universe.

Such a one has no particular mark, garb, or denomination to single him out. He is free from all bondages, conventions and rules of any order, sect, creed or religion. He is a universalist. Once this goal is reached, all the chains that bound him either to the worldly life, or to the life, later adopted, of self-discipline, automatically fall away from him. His purity is now not a relative acquisition, which is maintained by the observance of any rule, vow or control; but it

is a natural state born of the realisation of his pristine spiritual beauty, sanctity and peace.

So Sannyas, or any other method of approach to God, employed by various seekers of Truth, is only a means by adopting which the soul seeks liberation from the thralldom of lust, greed and wrath, and experiences the fullness and glory of its integral spiritual life and being.

THE LIGHT OF LIGHTS

When the heart becomes pure and is awakened to the consciousness of the Divine, the entire human vehicle reflects His light in all its constituents. The body, mind and senses then are permeated with this light. The person so blessed becomes truly a luminous expression of God. The spiritual radiance that goes out from him or her is cool like the rays of the moon and it elevates and heals the mentally diseased souls who come in contact with it. God reveals Himself in all His splendour in the heart of such a great one.

How does a person attain to this transcendent light and joy? The one and the only way is self-surrender, born of complete absence of egoism. By this alone the divine power and glory are made manifest in a human being. The heart is really a temple of God when one recognizes this and is aware of it. A person reveals his or her inner power and glory when the intellect is illumined with the light of God, the heart responds to the eternal symphony of love and the physical body pours out, spontaneously, energy, translating itself into divine action. The person is now no longer egoistic in his or her outlook and activity, but

is a vibrant instrument of the Divine, living and moving for the uplift and welfare of the world. The influence such a person casts over humanity and all creation is wonderful.

God is light and joy. God is love and wisdom. God is the supreme power that controls all the world. Such a God dwells in the hearts of us all. To realize Him is the supreme purpose and the goal of life. All else is of no importance or avail.

God is a reality. He is our intimate friend. It is by constant association with Him that we experience our oneness with Him. We start to reach Him as separate from Him, but ultimately the fusion between us and Him becomes so complete that duality disappears and we stand revealed as He Himself. Confusing diversity then gives place to absolute unity.

So long as we feel apart from Him, our life is beset with many an obstruction and we are subject to all kinds of cramping and unhappy vicissitudes. But when life is released from the bondage of its own making, manifesting its inherent spiritual power, light and grace, then it comes to its own and enjoys everlasting peace and bliss. The life becomes a light to itself and to all others. It is self-revealed and the magnificence of it is past thought and expression. May such a light spread all over the world and may humanity be blessed with the vision of it, and love and harmony prevail on the earth!

WHAT RARE ECSTASY !

The pagoda flower waves in the breeze and nods high above other tiny blossoms; the little bird, dark in

colour with a black beak and yellow patch on its glossy breast, is playing and skipping, dipping now and then its wee beak into the opened petals of the tilting pagoda. The big green leaves are throbbing to the response of the mild wind.

The distant coconut branches, long and lean, are trembling in the air: the light-tinted roses and deep red flowers — the green, yellow and crimson leaves of crotons, lend charm to the scene. The mango and neem trees, tall and stately, seem to bend over each other for a friendly communion.

The platinum sky, in which are floating thin and transparent clouds, bestows a subdued brightness to the landscapes down below.

Nature smiles — God smiles.

My heart is aglow with joy when I witness this wondrous phenomena, God revelling in His own beauty and luxuriance.

On the extensive green meadows, the famished cattle graze on the lavish offering of green grass by the bounteous Mother Earth, and wax fat and strong.

O God of plenty and abundance! none can rival Thee in Thy rich, free and reckless liberality. Thou art marvellous in Thy infinite variety — in shapes, colours, movements, ways and natures.

I saw and saw and my dazed eyes became dim, and I behold a halo spread over all space that resolved the multifaced worlds into one radiance, one presence and one truth.

Again the sun peeps out of the clouds shedding lustre on all the motley scenes of the earth, bringing out in soothing relief the varied beauty of nature against a splendrous background.

Oh, the bewitching pictures that flit before my wide open eyes, I gaze with unconcealed amazement, drinking in the enthralling panorama. Now my eyes close slowly, charmed with the soothing sweetness of the intoxication that is past expression.

O glorious World Master! O Thou Supreme Artist and Architect, O exquisite Dancer, the great Lover and Beloved! Thou who pourest Thy most heart-captivating celestial music, Thou art the enchanter who casteth Thy spell on all beings, drowning them in Thy eternal symphony; I bow to Thee who art divine wisdom, infinite love, almighty power and transcendent beauty.

Then I open my eyes, O! my Mother Divine — life and soul of the Universe, Thou showerest on us all Thy love that knows no bounds — a love that encompasses and absorbs us into Thy ecstatic Being — a love that transforms us into Thy likeness — that ultimately melts us entirely into Thy supreme Being.

The sun, moon, stars and all the heavenly bodies shine in the firmament as Thyself, revealed in a million forms. Infinite Thy bodies and Thy powers while all the time Thou art nameless and formless.

I close again my eyes and lo! that moment the universe disappears in me — lost in my immutable existence — the senses stilled and body forgotten — what peace, what joy — what rare ecstasy!

THY GRACE, OUR REFUGE

The azure sky shines in the light of the midday sun. All nature is in repose, for not a breath of air stirs the stillness of space. God sheds His rays of splendour and grace on all objects and beings. My

soul and body are attuned to Thy omnipresent Spirit and all the manifest worlds. Peace, peace reigns everywhere.

My heart is thrilled. A soft glow radiates from my eyes. I listen to the sweetest strains of music that subtly resounds through infinity! Yet am one with the silence that pervades the known and unknown spheres. My God — my life and soul! I am amazed at the lavishness of Thy kindness and love! I feel them at every moment of my life.

My whole being I lay at Thy feet and like camphor burn it in adoration to Thee by the fire of my devotion. All is Thine, O God, all is Thine. Why should I be grateful to Thee? Am I not Thy child — entitled to receive Thy care, love and protection?

I had turned away from Thee many a time. Now am settled at Thy feet for ever and ever. My gaze had been for various things, but now it is fixed at Thy feet for ever and ever. My spirit had wandered hither and thither, but now it is attached to Thy feet for ever and ever.

O my God of love and joy! I am eternally Thine. Shall I say, "I am Thyself"? People may call me names for declaring so. I speak as Thou hast taught me. It is the experience Thou alone hast granted me. Verily, Thyself and I are one.

There never was a separation between Thee and me. It was all Thy Lila — Thy inscrutable sport that once made me feel that I was far away from Thee.

O my Mother, my Master, Thy name be glorified. May Thy benediction pour in abundance on our distracted humanity, bringing them Thy ambrosial love, harmony and peace!

THY GRACE

Thy grace, O Beloved One — is boundless. I bask in it day and night. My one thought is of Thee. My life is hallowed by Thy remembrance.

Wherever I turn, Thy smiling and beautiful face confronts me and I go into raptures. How can I glorify Thee? My heart overflows — my eyes become moist. A strange glow appears in them. Joy courses through my veins.

I am lost in a consciousness in which I and Thou art one. What sweetness ineffable! O my Love and my Refuge, I am Thine, Thou art mine — what more can there be between Thee and me?

My mind is Thyself. My heart is Thyself. My will is Thyself, nay, my body is Thyself. I am totally Thyself. Worlds are Thyself. Is there anything besides Thyself?

I love myself. I serve myself. I dwell everywhere. I have become all. I see myself — I am my own Self. O Beloved, how grand art Thou!

My life started from Thee — lived and played in Thee, moved and danced in Thee, and last merged in Thee — Now I know my life has been and will ever be Thy life. Thou alone existeth. All hail, all hail to Thee!

My most brilliant star, my rarest gem, my dearest Love, my supreme goal, my highest and greatest object of adoration, my heart's worshipful Master — after all is said and done — last is to get dumb and be only thrilled by Thy all-absorbing nectarine remembrance!

HOW GOD CAME INTO MY LIFE

The human being is gifted with reason which can be best utilised by him to develop a keen aspiration for God, backed up with intense dispassion for sense enjoyments. Now, what is the aim of life? It is happiness. This cherished aim is fulfilled by realising God who is eternal happiness.

The pleasures I derived from the objects of the senses were not only transitory but were also accompanied by pain and grief — a fact I came to know too well. So I engaged myself in an all-round effort to divert the mind from the ephemeral objects to the eternal source of life — God. God, who is absolute existence, consciousness and bliss, is within me. Withdrawing the mind from the unreal — external things of life — I let it flow continuously towards Him through a steady remembrance brought about by a ceaseless chanting of His holy name. Constant remembrance purified and controlled my mind.

Now the mysterious grace of Guru — which awakened me in the first instance to seek God — completed its task by removing the mask of ignorance which enveloped my soul for ages, with the result that a flood of illumination poured out, permeating my body, senses and all the worlds. In this splendour my soul was lost, followed by the dawn of a cosmic consciousness and the knowledge of my still and all-pervading Atman or Self. Yet another vision, more exalted, more perfect and more joyous awaited my illumined Self and this is the fusion of the Atman with the universal manifestation; in other words, I realised that the Atman and the universe are one. This magnificent vision and experience, based on the realisation of the

absolute Self, transformed me, the human being, into the veritable embodiment of God in all His aspects.

As my soul stepped from the animal into the human, it now stepped from the human into the Divine — the Purushottama, a spiritual-cum-physical evolution — the grandest finale — the supreme fulfilment of God's will to reveal Himself in all His sublimity in this human being. Verily, God is the seeker and God is the sought. This is His inscrutable Lila. Truly, my soul and God — Jiva and Brahman — are one. All victory to Him!

Yet the highest spiritual possibilities are not exhausted. The sweetest and dearest relationship with Him — near and personal — which I maintained all along the initial struggle and aspiration, has at present become real, intimate and permanent. He is now my constant companion as a careful Mother and beneficent Master. In the face of man, beast and bird — nay, of all creatures and things also, I behold Him — my Beloved. Again all victory to Him!

MY BEING IS NECTAR

The tiny particle, my life, expanded and became the Infinite. My little vision spread out and became the cosmic and super-cosmic vision. All that exists resolved into one eternal being of pure splendour. I look at myself — am that splendour.

My being is nectar. My life is ecstasy. I am joy, joy and joy. They speak of God, my Beloved, as though He is different from them. They are He in so many shapes and forms. O Beloved, I am lost in wonder at Thy Lila!

O birds of various tints! flap your wings and show forth the hidden charm of your multihued wings. Warble on and express in plaintive tones your hymns of praise of your benevolent Maker. What inscrutable play is Thine! Thou art Thyself the birds.

I go on to write. Thoughts rise like sparks from the anvil. I am Thine. What more than this can I say? Yes, there is something more. I am Thyself. The green leaf on the tree, fluttering in the breeze, is saying, "The hand that made me is God."

Truly I am not in a hurry to go from this world. I love the world. To live in it is happiness. Recall me whenever Thou wilt. Till then I will fill myself with Thee who is pure bliss.

What boon shall I ask of Thee? Thou art all gracious. Thou hast given me everything. There is nothing left with Thee to give me. I am overwhelmed by Thy gifts. O God of bounty, Thou art at once the giver and also the receiver. This mystic Truth Thy child alone knows.

Who taught me to love Thee, O Master? Thou art the teacher. With what gentle voice Thou put me on the way — the way of goodness, purity and peace! Thou admonished me to bear all things, to forgive and to give love, love and love in return for whatever done to me. Thou turned my eyes to Thee alone. Thou made me talk madly of Thee. Thou prepared me to live and die for Thee. Thus Thou caught me in the net of Thy love and I became Thine for ever and ever.

First I adored Thy feet, approached them with all devotion. Grace was radiating from them. It fell on my heart. There was a flood of light and I was trans-

formed into a splendrous being full of power, love and wisdom.

Then I saw Thy face. It bewitched me. Those eyes, those smiles, what can I say of them? I went into an ecstatic trance, lost, lost in Thy ravishing beauty, and magnificence.

I stopped my pen but it runs on. The hand moves in spite of myself. In the heart, waves after waves rise like billows of the ocean. The Beloved shakes the waters of joy and the heart heaves to a strange rhythm diffusing and scattering flashes of divine radiance. Oh heart, have your own way. I stop when you bid me to. Heart is still and all is peace.

I AM THE RAY, THOU ART THE SUN

My Beloved calls. Heart! wake up from repose; eyes! open and see the visage of God; ears! hear the music divine; tongue! chant the melodious Name; hands! give all that you have, all that you are — yourself — away to the sublime Receiver. It is joy to give Thee, O Beloved One, that which is Thy own.

At first my thoughts dissolved in Thee and then they rose up again, imbued with Thy power, knowledge and joy and then mingled with the sweetest emotion, love, producing a glorious harmony which is my Beloved's perfect being — a blending of eternal power, wisdom and love.

I bow to Thee, my friend, my master and my mother! O magnificent One, my adoration to Thee is absolutely of no value compared to Thy infinite greatness and glory.

I am a ray and Thou art the all-illuminating sun.

As the ray is lost in the effulgence of the sun, so am I merged in Thee. Separate from Thee, I am nothing; One with Thee, I am everything.

My impatience to have Thee made me restless and frantic. They say impatience is not good. What do I know? Unless I long and thirst for Thee, unless discontent seizes me, unless my heart burns for seeing Thee day and night, how is it possible to get Thee and make Thee my own? It is Thou who caused the thirst, created the discontent and set fire to my heart. All credit is to Thee, my one refuge and goal.

The flitting shadows and lights formed by the swinging boughs of the tree, the attractive designs the sun draws on the yellow wall, the deep red flowers seen from a distance in relief, having a leafy green background, all show the varied beauty of my Beloved and I am under His everlasting spell.

I started to live in my Beloved's world when He removed the veil from my eyes. I am now moving about playfully in His benign presence as a child before its mother. He says, "Play on. I have set you free; have given you a new vision, a new life and a new joy that never fades. Don't worry. Don't bother."

All knowledge without love is tasteless. All power without love is tasteless. All power without love is vanity. All sweetness without love is nausea. I want love, who is Thyself, my saviour, my master and sole shelter.

In waking I gambol with Thee, in dream am inebriated with a surfeit of Thy joy, in sleep am absorbed in Thee. In waking I talk, in dream I am in a reverie, in sleep I lapse into silence.

Thou wantest me as much as I want Thee. We

are eager to meet each other. We meet! What joy! Eye meets eye — there is one vision! Words, uttered on either side, dissolve in each other. Our souls melt away into one subtle essence. We are one, yet two — two in one, and one in two.

MY SAVIOUR

I held Your soft hand as a child does of its mother. You guided and led me through the labyrinth of the world to the heaven of absolute peace and joy.

When thorns pricked my feet and I cried, You lifted me, removed the thorns and applied the healing balm. When the heat of life parched my life and I cried from thirst, You placed in my hands the cup of ambrosia. I drank and felt instant relief. When vampires — raging desires — sought to tear me to pieces, Your grace came to save me from their deadly talons and I became safe and secure. When the darkness of ignorance shrouded my soul and I cried through fright, You flashed a light and, thwarting the fears of the night, infused courage in my drooping heart. When temptations tried to overpower me to cause my fall, Your love sustained me and I stood firm and strong.

You saw to it that Your name does not slip from my tongue and gradually all my thoughts, feelings, nay, my entire life, was divinized. No thorns, no thirst, no desire, no darkness, no fears were there for me anymore. It is all You, inside and outside and everywhere. Light, love and joy are holding a feast and I am the guest, imbibing all the three at once, and I dance in excess of bliss and ecstasy.

Oh Master! Mother! now I am totally Yours, and

You are totally mine. In the depths of my heart and in all external expressions of my supreme Self, I am truly Yourself. This height of experience I reached by the grace of my Guru — the Saviour of all beings.

THE LURE ETERNAL

My life flowed in various channels seeking the path that leads to the Eternal. Was it due to my own initiative that I longed for Him? The Master Magician was playing His flute in sweet, low and melodious tones. The sleeping soul woke up.

The lure of the flute was irresistible. I turned this side and that. The Charmer played on the flute — the music was most entrancing. I ran hither and thither to find out wherefrom the melody came. I could hear distinctly the call of the flute. But from where the intoxicating sound came I could not know. Now it was heard near, then far off. From which direction it came, I failed to make out. O God, how He teased and tantalized me!

Physical loves and attachments were drawing me away from the spell of the flute which was well nigh overpowering me by its soothing and captivating music. A tug of war.

Gradually, the lower attractions of life lost their control. The sight became clearer; the heart received more light, ears were filled with the sound of the call and other noises ceased to distract. The path was found.

The flute-voice seemed to say, 'You have struggled hard to find me. I am straight in front of you.'

I rushed to Him and melted into the flute-player's

splendrous Being and became Himself.

Now I play His flute with His lips, producing the same world-enchancing music, and all are drawn to me and are lost in my immortal effulgence. The lured became the Lure Eternal!

I AM THAT

There is a charm, a magic power, in Thy name. It catches hold of people and turns them into Gods.

Thy name roots out all desires and bestows immortal peace and joy. The darkness of the soul is dispelled by Thy name flooding it with divine illumination.

What is it that Thy name cannot do? All good things flow from it. When Thy name enters the heart of the miser, he becomes a benefactor of the world. It transforms the cruel man into an image of compassion. Thy name removes hate from the heart, infusing love. It awakens the soul and drives off torpor and ignorance. Where there is narrowness of outlook, Thy name grants universal vision.

When Thy name, sung by Thy devotees, rings in my ears, I am not only thrilled, but my entire being is filled with ecstasy. Oh! What power is in Thy name! Saints sing its glory tirelessly. And I, Thy child, attune my tiny voice with theirs in extolling Thy name. Thy name is the sole sustainer of my life. It nourishes my heart and mind. It sends thrills through every vein and tissue of my physical being.

What more can I say? It has moulded me into Thy likeness, into Thy form and spirit. All victory and glory be to Thy name!

Thy name destroys misery and yields unending joy.

I became the votary of Thy name and was blessed beyond measure.

Thy name is Thyself, Thy very form, life and being. I am saturated with Thy name and have become Thyself — the resplendent Truth — the goal of seekers. I am That!

GOD-INTOXICATION

My Beloved's kindness came to me like the cool rays of the moon. It released me from bondage and healed my sorrows. What a magic touch! What miraculous change!

Now life flows in a blissful stream, glistening with the light of the Beloved. What a vision! The worlds are the forms of my Beloved. He is at once visible and invisible — the Supreme Being and non-being.

I wished Him to stand before my inner sight as an image of unsurpassed beauty — with smile on the face, compassion in the eyes, and love pouring out of Him. Lo! He is there before me, the enchanting Love of my heart.

When the thought of Thee, like a star, sparkles in the sky of my mind, I am lost in Thee, O Lord! The rapture I feel then is beyond compare. This rapture turns me finally into Thyself — raising me beyond all duality.

Thy glory, my Beloved, is seen everywhere. All objects and beings sing paeans to Thy greatness. I go near a tree and its green leaves chant of Thee. I look up to the sky, Oh! it opens out the blue veil and reveals Thy fascination.

A child comes to me — the little living figure of

Thy love — and I am charmed. I clasp it in my arms. I lean my head touching its head. Thrills and thrills! It talks, dropping sweetness at every word. Honey is insipid in comparison. O God of love, all hail to Thee!

The enthralling strains of music that fall into my eager ears are surcharged with celestial symphony, the essence of Thyself — my life and soul. Thy feet, O my Beloved, be ever on my head and I melt away in Thee!

I prayed to be mad of Thee. The prayer granted, mild breeze — “Blessed art thou, little beauty, for thou revealest the face of my Beloved.” It looks up and seems to smile.

Holiness and sanctity permeate all. My Beloved is everywhere. The entire nature is He. No God for me apart from nature. He covers all and is above all. I sought Him and became one with Him. I loved Him and became love itself. He shines in my eyes. My breath is fragrant with His breath. I move, because He moves. He is wonderful!

I tell the scented flower that nods its head in the I have become so. Thou hast totally possessed me. Now I have none but Thee. My entire being is vibrant with Thy love, light and bliss. Truly, I am no longer myself. I am Thyself! One alone exists — either Thyself or myself.

DEATH IS FALSE

My thought flies like a bird carrying the message of peace to all the worlds. A light goes out of my eyes that illuminates the entire cosmos. My heart responds

to the rhythm of a heavenly music that resounds through all space.

The angels hover round me — the Devas of the other worlds — the embodiments of the omnipresent Spirit. They look human, but they are my God in so many forms. The Deva, man, bird and beast are all the varied shapes taken by my God. They are all sweet and good.

I see Him and am lost in Him. I hear Him and am attuned with Him. I touch Him and become one with Him. In all planes of life I am united with Him.

With outstretched arms He beckons me and I rush to Him, and I am caught in His ecstatic embrace. I shut my eyes in the intoxication of joy. 'O Beloved'! — that is all I could say. O my Lord, my God, my supreme Mother, I am eternally Thine — I am Thyself.

How strange! I am Thyself, yet I am Thine. When I sit silent with eyes closed, I behold all the worlds and beyond in me, and myself in all the worlds and beyond. Whenever I am before anybody, I look at him as myself. His movements are mine. When he talks and acts, it is all myself.

Death is false. Every particle of the body in all its states is ever intensely alive — dust or ashes. Soul, body, universe, all beings and things are all one. Matter is Spirit, Spirit is matter. All is He and His expression!

Spirit is still, but it sings sweetly and universes are born. They live in the infinite ocean of the Spirit like ice floating on water.

All minds and all bodies! You are dear to me. You are made of my substance. My substance is omnipresent, immutable Spirit. Still, there are ripples in me.

They are the planets, stars and stellar spheres, ever in motion, whirling through the glowing etheric atmosphere. All hail, all hail to Thee! — the one Truth — the one Reality.

SAVIOURS AND SAINTS

AVATAR

A question is raised whether an Avatar and a God-realised soul possess the same power and vision and carry out the same mission in this world. Surely, so far as the knowledge of God is concerned, both are on the same plane, but in the field of action the Avatar brings down the light and power of the supreme Truth to a greater mass of humanity than a God-realized soul does. The Avatar embodies not only the inner perfection of the Spirit but also exercises all the power and glory of the Divine: whereas a God-realized soul throws the light and power upon a smaller portion of humanity and works under certain limitations. It is rightly said that the God-realized soul can be compared to a well and an Avatar to a river in flood: while the former can satisfy the thirst of a few who seek the well, the swollen river spreads out its water all over the country allaying the thirst of innumerable beings and creatures. So in the spiritual awakening of humanity the work of an Avatar is decidedly more extensive and far-reaching than that of a God-realized soul.

Moreover there is a clear assertion made by the Avatar that he has descended on the earth with the special mission of liberating mankind from ignorance and bondage. A God-realized soul does not make such a declaration. We see that the great Avatars like Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mahomed and Zoroaster are

saviours of humanity and redeemers of all fallen souls.

Again if we study their teachings we find Avatars have a message for the whole world. They preach universal love as the highest attainment which alone can establish unity, harmony and brotherhood in the world.

Some people would have us believe that the Avatars never existed and that their lives have only an allegorical meaning and relate the inner transformation of a soul from ignorance to higher divine nature. This opinion also is not true. All the Avatars, after whom the principal religions of the world are founded, are historical personages. Their historicity is denied because it is hard for some people to accept that God who is infinite and impersonal could manifest Himself within the limitations which the assumption of a physical body imposes upon Him. God, who is all in all, is at once limited and unlimited, finite and infinite, personal as well as impersonal. Encased in relative and perishable bodies as Avatars, God has through them exhibited omnipotent powers. They have done miraculous things which, judged by the unalterable laws of Nature, are impossible. Some may doubt whether the miracles did happen at all. They even go to the length of opining that they are sheer concoctions. This view cannot carry much weight with those faithful devotees who, after a sufficient advance on the spiritual path, have experienced the wonders of the inner life. They know that in the realm of the Spirit nothing is impossible. In the light of the writer's unique realizations, he can boldly declare that a person inspired by the spirit of God can reveal miraculous powers. Apart from the power of performing miracles which Avatars possess, they release a world-redeeming spiritual force by which they transform men

steeped in ignorance and sin into veritable angels of purity, wisdom, love and peace. Whoever comes in contact with them even in thought and meditation becomes illumined by their light and power. Avatar is God Himself in human form.

SAINT'S GRACE

It is essential for a devotee, who is keen upon realizing the infinite love of God, to receive the touch and grace of a saint. It is through the transmitting power of an illuminated soul that the aspirant is awakened to the reality of his true and higher life which is union and oneness with God. It is only by such contact that the devotee is able to maintain a continual stream of God-remembrance in his mind.

A saint is he who is an embodiment of divine love, wisdom and power. He is God Himself manifest in flesh and blood. He is at once Guru and God. To adore him is to worship the highest Reality dwelling in our hearts. He is the great redeemer and saviour of all fallen souls. The grace of a saint converts an erring and ignorant mortal into a being full of wisdom, love and joy.

We become that which we constantly contemplate. If we keep a great personal ideal of a saint before us and through faith and reverence tune our life and spirit with his life and spirit, we are gradually moulded into the likeness of the great soul. It must be understood that we should not merely cling to the external form of our accepted spiritual ideal, but we should realize within ourselves the immortal Spirit which is revealed in the Guru.

In order to receive a saint's grace that transmutes us into the Divine, we should fully open ourselves to his regenerating influence. Before the saint, we must be as humble as a blade of grass and as simple and innocent as a child. Our trust and refuge in him must be entire and complete. Given this condition, the saint's grace is sure to pierce through us, destroying the darkness of ignorance, and enlighten our hearts with the glory and sublimity of divine love and peace. It is then that the thought of God will permeate our mind so much so that it will send a current of ecstasy coursing through every atom of our physical and psychical being. Love, light and joy will now radiate through us. We shall realise the presence of God everywhere. We will lose ourselves in the ineffable bliss born of our dwelling totally in the Lord and ultimately merge our individuality in the cosmic light of our beloved Master, Mother and Lord — the supreme Love who is God.

This is the summit of divine attainment to which a saint's grace leads the struggling soul. Therefore, let all who aspire for eternal love, bliss, power and wisdom seek first the society of saints and by their contact be reborn into a new life surcharged with an infinite vision.

SAINTS ARE SAVIOURS

Society of saints is the most effective means to awaken the heart to the consciousness of God. The aspirants should approach them in all humility, with an attitude to receive their enlightening influence. Saints are always sympathetic and gracious. They radiate love, peace, and joy, for they are the very embodiments

of God on earth.

The chief difficulty that confronts an aspirant is to control and purify the mind. Presence of a saint works like a charm upon the mind. It is at once freed from impure thoughts and attains calmness and serenity. A new light and joy is experienced by the aspirant. He transcends time and space and becomes filled with a rare spiritual ecstasy. This is the foretaste of the full glory of an immortal state of liberation and peace, which the aspirant aims at and achieves in the end. Now he looks upon the pleasures of the senses as unworthy of pursuit and as nothing compared to the pure, holy and exalted happiness he enjoyed in the company of the saint. It is now that his yearning to attain the *summum bonum* of life — the realization of God — becomes intense and all-consuming. Thereafter, his one passion is to keep the mind in tune with God. He feels that God resides in his own heart. With a singleness of purpose and through discipline and endeavour he seeks to merge his little individuality into the cosmic and eternal personality of the Divine.

Hence it is seen that the sole incentive to enter on the divine path and march on it with eagerness, hope and joyousness, comes from the benign and redeeming influence of saints. To listen to their teachings and to serve them paves the way to this sweet consummation. It is rightly said that saints are like mirrors. If you want to know who you are in reality, you have to go to them and you will at once realise your Divinity. It is likely that when you move away from them this consciousness may wear off, and so it is essential that the aspirant should do Sadhana for establishing this experience and realization. There are two ways of doing

it : surrender and meditation. Surrender means handing yourself over to the Lord of the universe dwelling in the heart of all beings and creatures. Meditation is a practice of identification of yourself with Him in His all-pervading, immutable, resplendent and rapturous being. The aspirant now recognises the supremacy of the Divine Power in all the activities and movements of his life and that of the world. "I am not the doer, O Lord! It is by Thy will and power, all things happen. Thou art the Master-power that controls all the activities in the world. Thou art all in all and Thou alone existeth." When the aspirant feels thus, he is flooded with divine effulgence, peace and joy. His heart opens and reveals the glory of universal love and his mind is illumined with universal vision. He realizes his eternal Beloved as every body and every thing. He is surcharged with divine light, power and bliss. The acme of spiritual experience is now reached. Verily, the grandeur of this state is inexpressible. May all aspirants attain this goal and be ever blessed!

GREAT TEACHERS OF THE WORLD

The differences of class, creed, race and nationality, which we behold in the world, are merely incidental; primarily, humanity is one. The aim of all religions is to make human beings realise this supreme unity of all life. Let us briefly try to understand what the Great Teachers of the world have said.

In Hinduism the ancient Rishis and the later incarnations and saints have insistently preached the sovereignty of the Spirit over matter, and that in the light of spiritual knowledge, all beings and creatures are:

essentially one. Acquisition of mutual love, toleration and harmony is the keynote of their teachings, because they declare, by developing these qualities alone real happiness and freedom is attained by a human being.

In Christianity we find that Jesus Christ — the Prince of Peace — taught that the intimate fellowship of men, as children of the same God, can alone free human hearts from sin and sorrow, and grant them true freedom and peace. His last words to his disciples. — "Love one another" — are significant.

The Prophet of Arabia, Muhammad, came to establish a brotherhood on earth. He held, to unite in the name of God meant real strength and happiness. His exhortation was to submit to the will of God and live in peace.

Buddha — the embodiment of compassion — preached on the triumph of love over hatred and showed how, renouncing selfish desires of the heart, a man can conquer the ego and attain emancipation. He laid down that kindness to all creatures is the outward expression of such an illumined life.

Zoroaster delivered a message of love and goodwill. He laid stress upon the absolute purity of life as a necessary condition for attaining divine light and peace. He too taught mutual help, sympathy and friendliness can alone bring salvation to the soul.

Guru Nanak invoked a tremendous spiritual power for uniting a vast number of people into one common fold. He fired them with true devotion and allegiance to God, brushing aside all non-essential observances that created division and dissension.

Then again, we have many other religious Teachers who come from time to time in different parts of the

world to deliver the message of the unity of mankind, as an ideal to be realised by all God-lovers. Thus it is clear that humanity as a whole is one family and God is the supreme parent whose grace shines upon all alike.

The goal of all religions is the same — liberation of the soul from the bondage of the lower nature and the attainment of union with God. We know this achievement is entirely dependent upon an individual's friendly attitude towards his fellowmen. Still, it is deplorable that there are acute rivalries and dissensions among the followers of these religions. They fight with each other and spill blood in the name of religion. While God should stand for unity and harmony, in His name the violent and brutal instincts of man are let loose to cause illwill, discord and strife in the world. Man, in his ignorance, wages war for earthly power and glory. When he discovers his relationship with God, he becomes a man of peace and loves all alike. Saying we are children and servants of God, how can we still harbour hatred for our fellowmen and fight with them, and that too as votaries of our faith? No Prophet or Teacher preached this way to his followers.

To realise world-unity, it is essential that we should enter into the realm of the Spirit where the surface distinctions do not exist, where all beings are equal in the eyes of God. The path is to elevate our heart towards Him, to get our mind filled with His remembrance, to commune with Him with our heart and soul and ultimately to surrender ourselves to His will in all aspects. It is now that our vision is illumined with an all-embracing love and we behold our fellow-beings as our near kith and kin. It is now that we break through the veil of diversity and realise our common and uni-

versal bond of affection and love, knowing that all strife, fight and warfare is born of sheer folly — outcome of a most selfish outlook upon life — cause of wanton pain and suffering to ourselves and to others.

Life is a noble gift of God. If it is not imbued with the spirit of divine love, light and peace, it assumes the wild nature of the denizen of the jungle. The warring instincts belong to the brute creation. Man is endowed with powers to develop divine qualities. If he only hearkens to the words of the Great Masters and attunes his life with God, what a heaven he can make upon earth!

• O friends, to whatever religion we may belong, let us raise our heart constantly to the throne of God within us and by holding sweet communion with Him through prayer, Bhajan or meditation, reveal our inherent virtues of peace and harmony. By this we will not only enlighten and beautify our life but also make the world put on a serene and smiling face. As it is, the devastating tide of the present war is travelling in rapid strides with the object of enveloping the entire globe, and converting our fair earth into a vast slaughter house. The Spiritual Power is far more potent than physical power. The power of Love is greater than the power of hate. This is the experience of all men and women of God.

Let us then all unite in the supremacy of the omnipotent God and bring down His power and grace to cool the fires of destruction that are now raging in the world. Let us, by giving up our differences, live with each other as brethren and sisters, and show to the world the way of true happiness. Let us pray to God for strength, purity and peace. Let us pray to Him for

harmony and goodwill on earth. Let us pray to Him for the speedy termination of this cruel war. Let us pray to Him for the triumph of love, trust and righteousness. Let us pray to Him to awaken us to our relationship with Him and our kinship with mankind. Let us pray to Him to grant us light and wisdom so that we can see Him in the faces of all beings and creatures.

WHAT A SAINT STANDS FOR

The aim of a saint's life is to spend all its energies, physical, mental and spiritual, for the welfare of humanity. The struggling and distressed souls call for his sympathy, goodwill and help. He is, by nature, all kindness, mercy and love. So at every step, his life is poured out as a selfless dedication for the removal of pain and misery in the world, in whatsoever form they exist. Blessed are they who share with the saint in acts of service. The world misunderstands a saint. Some expect him to live and act according to a standard which they have set up. They criticise, dictate and find fault with him because he does not fit into a mould prepared by them.

The ways of a saint are mysterious. He is a glorious embodiment of divinity shedding light and grace on all who come in contact with him. The saint is no doubt all-powerful, because he is a vehicle through whom the divine Shakti reveals itself. Still in the task of uplifting mankind and bringing unity and harmony in the world, he invites help and co-operation of all aspirants and devotees who have faith in and love for him. The great Masters and Teachers of the world, past and present, are shining examples. Krishna fought against

forces of darkness with the help of his intimate devotees and friends. Buddha preached his religion of *ahimsa* and emancipation with the aid of his innumerable disciples. Jesus Christ carried the light of his Gospel of Love to all the nations on the earth, through his faithful followers. Rama conquered the great Asura; who was a source of terror to all peace-loving people of the time, assisted by monkeys who were devoted to him. Instances of this kind can be multiplied.

It must be considered that when God affords us an opportunity to be of service to a saint, we are really blessed. Life is worth living when all its powers are at his feet. Intellect often misguides but the heart awakened to divine love is a true counsellor.

A saint's dependence upon God is always entire. God protects him and provides him with all the materials to carry out his mission through human agents. Whenever a saint receives any assistance from any quarter he takes it as coming from his eternal Beloved. All his transactions are with Him. He is the giver and He is the receiver. When people take part in any task which a saint undertakes, they do so for their own material or spiritual advancement. They do not grasp this and think that they are all-important and nothing would happen without them. They forget that God, by His inscrutable methods, carries out His will through His prepared human instruments on this earth. Man, in his conceit, thinks that he is the doer, he is wise and that his ideas are correct however narrow and imperfect they may be.

It has become a vogue with many so-called spiritual aspirants to go on visits to saints, not to draw light and inspiration from them for their upward progress, but

to compare and judge them. They think they are very clever but their cleverness is nothing before the magnificent glory of saints who shine by their own light and are the benefactors of humanity.

Therefore let the spiritual aspirants honour saints, serve them selflessly, entitle themselves to their grace and, thus illuminating their lives with divine splendour, rise to the stature of sainthood.

VALUE OF SATSANG

There are two ways by which a spiritual aspirant can awaken and purify his heart for the realisation of God within and without him. The first is the society of saints and the second, repetition of the holy name of God.

It is in the company of a saint that the aspirant becomes conscious of the existence of God and a yearning to attain Him is created in his heart. This contact also grants him a foretaste of the divine bliss born of such an attainment. Just as a lotus blooms in the rays of the morning sun, so the aspirant's heart opens and receives the subtle influence which a saint exerts on him, giving him the experience of immortal peace and joy. Moreover, the saint's contact slackens the aspirant's attachment to the objects of the senses, thus enabling him to easily concentrate his mind upon the indwelling Divinity. So, it is essential for the aspirant to seek the company of a saint and bask in the sunshine of his grace.

As the mind has been allowed to roam about as it liked from a long, long time, to curb its nature and to engage it in continued remembrance of God becomes,

in the early stages of the aspirant's struggle, extremely difficult. In spite of the aspirant's possessing a spirit of dispassion towards the attractions of life, his mind refuses to be easily guided towards the eternal Reality, who is the source of the world and all creatures in it. Hence, the adoption of a method of steady discipline for achieving concentration is necessary. The sovereign way for the aspirant is to take to the repetition of the powerful name of God with all faith and devotion. God's name is invincible. The Name is the bestower of peace, power and knowledge. It can remove all the impurities of the heart and fill it with the joy and radiance divine. Very few seem to know the greatness of the divine Name. The wonders that the Name can work are realised only by those who have made proper use of it. The troubled mind gets peace and rest by taking refuge in the Name. The weakened and the diseased mind regains its strength and health by chanting the Name. The mind, in which sweep the blasts of unbridled passions, can be freed from them by the power of the Name. The soul, whose vision is clouded by ignorance, can be made aware of God, who is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, through the constant utterance of the Name. In short, victory over the lower nature and perfection of the higher spiritual life can be gained by the aspirant's unwavering reliance on God's name.

A man's life, however high-placed it may be from the material or worldly standpoint, is far away from real peace and happiness. The soul can be released from its miseries only by living in the divine consciousness. Man's desires for sense pleasures cast a veil over him, denying him the joy of his union with the Divine.

It is for this reason that he lives like an animal, only to fulfil the cravings of his lower nature. His association with the body and the senses is the cause of his sorrow and bondage. When he directs his vision inward and communes with the immortal Self and beholds the world about him and all creatures and things in it as the expression of the Self, it is then that he achieves the supreme fruition of human life. Now he becomes a pure, exalted and illumined vehicle of God through whom rays of all-embracing love and beneficence spread everywhere in the world. In this state he feels a rare perennial joy by giving himself away for the good of others.

Keeping in view the sublime goal described above, the aspirant should strive with all his heart to reach it by drawing inspiration from the contact of saints and by chanting God's glorious name.

THE CONTACT OF A SAINT

As any object brought into contact with fire becomes hot, as any tree near the sandalwood tree becomes fragrant, as any insect in close touch with the Bhramara becomes like the Bhramara, so a bound, ignorant and unhappy soul in the company of a saint is converted into the likeness of the saint, and enjoys immortal freedom, knowledge and bliss. A man's nature develops according to his association and environment. The process of transformation is slow or rapid according to the receptive capacity of the aspirant who seeks the society of a saint. Sometimes the contact of a saint does not appear to have produced any ostensible effect or change in the aspirant. But it must be understood that

the meeting has not been in vain. It is a transformation primarily from within outwards. First the depths of the aspirant are touched. Very often this experience is not even felt by the aspirant. But gradually when the change is worked out in the external consciousness, the aspirant feels that it has taken place.

The first result of the contact with a saint is an inner awakening and a dim aspiration for release from the thralldom of desire, and attainment of perfect peace and joy. As the contact is repeated, both these feelings get more and more strengthened until they envelop and engross the entire outer mind or consciousness. Now a sudden dispassion for the things of the world and a keen longing for the Divine seizes the spirit of the aspirant.

There are many instances where the flickering light of the awakening caused by the society of saints may appear to have gone out, extinguished by the strong breeze of Maya. But this is not true. The light is still burning, however dim it may be, and at some unwatched moment it may blaze forth into a living fire of one-pointed devotion to God.

When the complete change into Divinity above the plane of the lower nature is achieved, the soul of the aspirant is united totally with the all-pervading and all-transcendent being of the Godhead. He realises the supreme glory of a universal life, one with God, radiant with divine love, joy and peace. By reaching this state, the aspirant comes by the highest and richest destiny to which human life points.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi, the outstanding world figure of the day, has departed from our midst. We know that only the physical part of him has perished but that his immortal spirit still abides with us and dwells and will dwell always in the hearts of his admirers and devotees of the present generation and also of the coming generations for ages and ages. Essentially, Mahatma Gandhi was a saint or God-man. He infused in the hearts of his followers, all over the world, faith in God, and led them on the path of divine love, righteousness and truth. His principle of non-violence is nothing but the principle of universal love based on the realisation of the supreme unity of all life on this earth. His deep anxiety for the welfare of humanity, his compassion towards the sufferers, the poor and the down-trodden, his sustained concern in bringing about goodwill, amity and harmony among people who sought to ruthlessly destroy each other's life and property, as displayed in the communal riots, and his untiring effort for the removal of injustice done to the Harijans or the so-called untouchables, mark him out as a benefactor of humanity, unparalleled in the history of the world for many centuries past.

Mahatma Gandhi toiled indefatigably for the good of India in particular and the world at large in general. Every day it is becoming more and more evident, after the mortal part of him was confined to the flames, that his imperishable spirit is working with a greater intensity, for awakening the world to the consciousness of its inherent unity. While the wave of mourning passes over the world, his ever glowing spirit seems still to inspire and galvanise the hearts of people in different

parts of the earth to the awareness of the supreme Truth or God — the one great Master that determines the destinies of the human race. By striving to bring humanity nearer God when walking on the earth, he is yet, after leaving it, subtly working towards the formation of a universal brotherhood. His message of love and truth is producing a greater and more far-reaching effect on the minds of people now than when he was alive in the flesh. He has veritably roused us all to the supreme need of the establishment of peace and goodwill on earth and convinced us that strife, discord and war must disappear from the face of it. Saints of Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual eminence do not die. As a result of the supreme sacrifice which he made, may hatred and illwill be eradicated from the hearts of men all over the world! May mutual love and friendliness prevail so that the entire humanity live together in harmony and peace!

The above tribute to his exalted and illumined soul cannot be complete without making mention of his predominantly devotional nature and unshakable faith in the name of God. By unbroken communion with the Divine through the practice of Ramnam he became a radiant Vibhuti who dedicated his life for the service of God in humanity. Verily, there is no easier way of linking the soul with God and beholding Him everywhere — in all beings and creatures — than constantly remembering Him by the utterance or singing of His holy and all-powerful Name.

LOVE — THE WORLD OF SAINTS

A man usually lives in the world of senses. His

desire for perishable things becomes the motive force of his life. His egoism, from which are born narrow-mindedness, selfishness and greed, keeps him bound to the body-idea giving rise to like and dislike. In this state he experiences, at every step, fear, doubt, pain and grief.

Whereas a man who has stepped out of the world of senses into the realm of divine love, light and peace through a constant recollection of his higher, real, enlightened and eternal life, which is one with God, enjoys a freedom and felicity which is inexpressible.

A lift to this new world of divine joy, love and light is first obtained by a man in the company of a saint. To move with him is to move in this new world. To live with him is to share in his exalted consciousness. So, communion with a saint is essential for those whose minds are Godward bent.

What we notice in the society of a saint is the predominance of divine love over every other feeling, impulse and thought. Where he lives, the atmosphere is surcharged with this love. To bask in the sunshine of this purest of emotions is to sublimate life into the eternal essence and truth.

Love should therefore be the guiding factor in the life of an aspirant. This love should reflect in his thoughts, words and actions. The halo of this love should hover round its votary until it enters into his entire being transforming him into a very image of love. Truly, love is God — God who is seen as the universe and all beings, creatures and things — a love that radiates on all alike.

So our theme is of a new world, the saint and divine love. The moment a man is raised to this new

world, through association with saints, his life is filled with the splendour of love. This is the aim of life. All who strive will achieve it and be blessed, and the world we live in will be changed from its present chaotic condition into a world of harmony, goodwill and peace.

CONTACT WITH SAINTS

The real awakening, that turns the thought of man towards God, comes through the touch of a devotee or a saint. Wherever you observe an awakening of this kind, you have to take it that it came about through the contact of a great soul. Thereafter the aspirant will be started on a keen struggle for keeping his mind fixed on the one thought, namely, that of God. The more an aspirant comes in contact with saints, the greater is his progress towards the goal. No doubt, contact of the saint awakens the soul; but to establish oneself firmly in the higher consciousness which one attains in the saint's presence, one has to enter on the path of self-discipline — concentration and meditation. Real Sadhana commences at this juncture. All those, who are turned to the path of spiritual realisation, must be considered as having received the necessary touch of a saint; and all these admit, in all cases, that in view of their past, they did not appear to have deserved the sudden elevation in their life effected by the Divine Grace. Even the worst of men, such as Valmiki, Paul, Jagai and Madhai, by coming under the influence of saints, attained illumination.

Man, if he aspires to realise his divine nature, and to struggle on to remain permanently in this higher consciousness, must court the society of saints. In fact,

the society of saints alone enables him to be aware of what he really is, and leads him on the path of Sadhana. The fact that a person is on the path makes it clear that he has got a glimpse of the supreme Reality through the touch of a saint, although he may not be aware of it. If that were not so, his keen desire to attain Truth would not be there.

The contact of saints alone is responsible for the regeneration of the fallen soul.

SRI RAMACHANDRA

Equality is the keynote in the lives of all great Avatars and saints of the world. Their mission in the world is to help the weak, to relieve the suffering, and elevate and bless, with their grace, the humble devotees who take refuge in them. The glorious life story of Sri Ramachandra — God Himself, revealed in all His brilliance and power — teaches us the one great lesson, namely, that we have to merge our individuality into His divine personality, so that we can attain to a vision filled with love and compassion towards all creatures on this earth. As we see in the various acts of Sri Ramachandra, His divine love went out to all alike, be the individual a jungle woman, an outcaste, a Shudra, a sinner or one of the stock of demons. Shabari, Vidura, Guha, Ahalya, Vibhishana — all came under the light of His Grace. Even the lower animals — the monkeys and birds — were not excepted. How can we best please this great Master? Surely it is by loving and serving those whom *He* loved. Service done in His name and for His sake is the main factor in the life of a true devotee. The supreme Lord is verily seated

in the hearts of us all. In fact, He is the driver and we are the chariots. We feel we are His instruments, when we have dedicated ourselves completely to His service. A Master, more loving and more powerful, we can never have. His name is filled with wonderful powers. To possess His name is to possess Him. To think of Him is to become one with Him. To take His name is to realise our fellowship with Him. Oh Lord of Lords, every glory be Thine and for Thy name, for ever and ever!

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

A sun of rare spiritual brilliance has set. Sri Ramana Maharshi renounced His body on the night of the 14th April, 1950 at His Ashram in Tiruvannamalai. His passing away has produced a most conspicuous void in our world today. Thousands of His devotees in India and foreign countries are feeling the loss most sorrowfully. We can take consolation in the fact that since Sri Ramana, as the Supreme Spirit, is imperishable, He dwells always in the hearts of us all. For, He was the very incarnation of the Divine.

Sri Ramana was a Saviour of souls. The men and women who went to Him for spiritual illumination, returned with their hearts filled with divine peace and joy. His look was most dynamic. When He cast His gaze on any aspirant, who stood or sat before Him, it electrified the person and entirely turned the course of his life Godwards. Sometimes it shook the very foundation of that person's life and surcharged it with unutterable peace and ecstasy. Vast numbers, from different countries and nationalities, today look up to

Him as a great redeeming spiritual force that would bring about a regeneration in the life of humanity.

Sri Ramana's philosophy is very simple. He asks you to find out "WHO AM I?" This self-enquiry directly turns your mind inward and makes you realise the truth that the individual 'I' to which you are so perversely clinging has no existence. In other words, the self-enquiry enables you to completely dissolve the ego-sense and grants you at once the consciousness of the Reality. You now know that you are the supreme Atman — the one, eternal, indivisible, all-pervading and blissful Truth.

Here Ramdas must say a few words about his personal contact with Sri Ramana. It was 27 years ago (in 1923) that Ramdas was drawn to Him and had the brief contact of about five minutes with Him. But these five minutes were for him pregnant with immense spiritual significance and possibility. When Sri Ramana intently gazed on Ramdas and the eyes of both met, Ramdas felt He was pouring into him His spiritual power and grace in abundance, so much so that Ramdas was thrilled, as His divine light shone on his mind, heart and soul. Sri Ramana's eyes always radiated a splendour, which was simply unique and irresistible — a splendour mingled with infinite tenderness, compassion and mercy. The few minutes that Ramdas spent in His holy company meant a momentous impetus in his spiritual career.

With the above few words of loving tribute to Sri Ramana Maharshi, Ramdas offers his humble salutations to Him. May His Spirit ever illumine the hearts of all His devotees is the earnest prayer of His child.

YOGI SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo, the great Yogi of Pondicherry, has passed away. In the course of three years, three towering spiritual personalities have left us — Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Ramana Maharshi and Yogi Sri Aurobindo. Indeed, the world is very much poorer for the departure of these great souls at a most critical period in its history. Sri Aurobindo is well known all over the world. As such, to write anything about him on this occasion is really superfluous. But a tribute to his exalted memory is appropriate.

Ever since the time he retired from the field of politics and entered on the path of spirituality, he has striven to realise the Yoga which had never been, as he asserts, attempted before him. His bold declaration on this subject and the adventurous spirit with which he made researches into the new fields of the highest spiritual possibilities show how deep was his understanding about the mysteries of life and immortality.

His personality was dynamic. He radiated a power and peace that electrified the hearts of all who had his Darshan. To lakhs of people he was a source of unique inspiration and enlightenment. Although physically he will be absent from our midst, we can confidently say that his spirit attuned to the highest realisation of Truth will still enliven, awaken and transmute the lives of thousands who have heard about him and who have read his spiritually vibrant messages.

It is but natural that his numerous disciples and devotees should feel the great loss they sustained in the passing away of their revered and beloved Master. May the Almighty bring to their hearts solace by blessing them with the consciousness that the Master dwells in.

their hearts and he is ever guiding them and filling them with his light and grace! With heart full of love and devotion we offer our adorations to him.

SATSANG — THE PARASMANI

Satsang means contact of Truth, which is God. Satsang can be had either in the company of saints or by conversing, singing or reading about God and His glories by a group of His devotees. God is ever dwelling in the hearts of all living beings. Satsang leads one to the realisation of Him. In other words, you first become conscious of this indwelling Reality and then identify yourself with Him and achieve eternal freedom and peace. Company of saints is an essential means for awakening the soul and making it progress rapidly in its march towards knowledge of God. The nature which you have to develop in order to enable God to reveal Himself in you in all His purity, light and joy is that of a child — ever cheerful, free, pure, guileless and enlightened. A man's temperament and outlook changes according to the company he keeps. If he associates with saints he becomes a saint, whereas if he associates with people who are immersed in worldliness and have no faith in God he becomes like them. While in the former case one realises perfect bliss and freedom, in the latter case he gets deeper in the mire of bondage and becomes subject to fear, worry and all kinds of miseries. Satsang is an invaluable means for the removal of the evil of ignorance that covers the soul and makes it oblivious of its immortal, radiant and blissful nature.

It will not do to depend only on the external contact

of a saint for one's spiritual development and attainment. The contact no doubt awakens and directs the mind towards God — the goal of life. Then he should keep up steady and unbroken remembrance of God at all times. His mind should be filled with the one predominating thought of God and thus be ever in tune with Him. Thereafter his struggle is to maintain this state until his individual self merges into the cosmic self of the Divine and he feels His presence within and without him everywhere. Every possible means for achieving this end should be adopted, of which Satsang is the most essential.

Sadhana consists in control of the mind and the senses. The mind must be concentrated upon God by continuous remembrance and meditation. The outgoing thoughts that dwell upon the objects of senses have to be curbed by intensifying your love and devotion for God through prayer and Satsang. When sense-desires are found to be too strong to be easily controlled, a prayer to God should go forth from your heart — a prayer like the cry of a child to the mother, filled with all the force of your spiritual aspiration and need. Such a prayer opens up a channel, as it were, between yourself and the Divine within you and from Him will flow into you invincible strength and everlasting peace. When you humble yourself before God and recognize that His will alone is supreme, then you reach a state of self-surrender that completely eliminates your ego-sense and brings you immediate vision and realisation of God. Now your eyes behold His light, life and power in all forms, beings and creatures in the world. Verily, they all stand before you as the very expression or embodiment of God. In this beatific vision and experience you

enjoy a rare joy and ecstasy which is simply inexpressible. Your entire being radiates nothing but divine light and joy. This is the attainment which every Sadhaka should aim at. Because, this constitutes what is commonly spoken of as God-realisation. Your heart in this state of divine experience and exaltation is filled with infinite love, waves of which spread out everywhere covering all beings and creatures. This universal love is based upon your identity with the all-pervading spirit of God. Just as one burning wick lights another; just as a magnet induces magnetism in a piece of iron; just as the Parasmani (a philosopher's stone) turns base-metal into gold; just as a sandalwood tree in a group of other species of trees converts them into its likeness; so, entire transformation takes place in the Sadhaka through contact with a saint.

Saints are really the saviours of fallen souls. If you are earnest in seeing God and realising your oneness with Him, then seek the company of saints as a first step to the fulfilment of this aspiration of yours. Another factor in Sadhana which should not be ignored is that whenever you are disturbed by too much mingling in the world and you have no opportunities for Satsang, then retire to a quiet spot alone by yourself and spend some time in prayer, meditation and chanting God's name. Sadhana in solitude is often very useful. Here you can have direct communion and talks with Him. In short, make God your all in all. Dedicate all your forces, both physical and mental, at His feet and become His entirely. Be His eternal child looking upon Him as your eternal parent. Love and serve Him with all your heart and make your life supremely blessed. The background for such a glorious life is purity, righteous-

ness, truthfulness, kindness and compassion towards all living creatures, and active help to the suffering and distressed fellow-beings. True devotion must enable us to develop these qualities. Lust, greed and wrath must have no place in such a life. The spiritual structure is built upon a moral foundation. This must not be ignored. Absolute purity is the sure condition for attaining God-vision and the deepest spiritual experience.

BUDDHA THE SAVIOUR

Buddha is a veritable sun of spiritual effulgence. He came into the world more than 2500 years ago and his power and glory still holds sway on a large portion of the human race. He is a redeemer and saviour of souls, just as Krishna and Christ are. His burning renunciation, his absolute purity in thought, word and deed, his heart throbbing with love and compassion towards all living creatures in the world, his illuminating presence that brings solace and peace to sufferers caught in the grip of pain and misery, stand out in bold relief whenever we meditate upon him.

The message of non-violence and love which issued forth from his divine lips so long a time ago still reverberates and will reverberate throughout the passage of time. It is a message which brings solace to the aching heart of humanity. There is no period in the history of the world when this great message is more needed than at the present time. The world has been and is in the throes of discontent, discord and distress, and Buddha's exhortation of love and peace can alone relieve the earth from its heavily pressing burden of illwill, hate and injustice and the consequent agony of disaster and war.

Buddha's teachings, taken in their totality, can be resolved into one illuminating short edict, namely, "Give love for hate". This brief sentence is pregnant with the greatest uplifting and divinising power, and when it is followed with faith and surrender, it can transmute the life of a human being into one of supreme tranquillity, light and beneficence.

Buddha never sought to define the ultimate Truth which all beings are in quest of, because Truth is inexpressible. It is realised only by purifying our mind, emotions and actions; and for achieving this end he sets down certain rules of conduct which, if adopted, will lead the soul to a state of deliverance from the deep-seated ignorance with which it is enveloped. This deliverance or emancipation, Buddha calls Nirvana. Nirvana is the attainment of supreme inner freedom and peace in which the soul is freed from the thirst for sense objects and the enjoyments accrued from them. He teaches that by the negation or elimination of that which is transitory or unreal, the ineffable Reality can be realised. He emphasises that absolute purity is the only sure way to Nirvana. Compassion towards all beings is both the means and result of such a realisation.

Let us therefore learn from this great World-Teacher the lesson by following which we can make our lives in every way blessed, a great force for radiating love, light and peace towards all our fellow-beings on this earth. It is by love we find union with them. It is by love that we conquer our lower nature, baser instincts and desires. It is by love that we ignite within us the flame of true wisdom and knowledge. It is love that makes our hands and feet engage themselves in service, without expectation of any reward, for healing the sorrows of

the world. Buddha is a very embodiment of this love. May his love awaken the hearts of all beings, inspiring them to live together in perfect harmony and goodwill and establish thereby a lasting spirit of unity and brotherhood on this earth!

MOTHER KRISHNABAI'S UNIQUE SELF-SACRIFICE

Anandashram was started here in Ramnagar, near Kanhangad, in May 1931. Shortly thereafter, Ramdas became a teacher of English for Krishnabai and Sharada. Of the two, Krishnabai was found to progress in her lessons rapidly. She wrote a fine hand and set herself to the study of the language with all her heart. The reason why she took to this study, according to her, was that she found Ramdas had nobody to assist him in his correspondence and other writing work. So her ambition at the time was to get well acquainted with the English language in order to become his amanuensis. But Ramdas soon had to give up the teaching as the number of visitors increased largely and almost all the time at Krishnabai's disposal had to be devoted to their service, working in the kitchen. Thus she had no leisure to pursue her studies.

In the early years of the Ashram life, there were no paid servants in the Ashram and all the duties were distributed among the Sadhaka inmates. But the brunt of the work was borne by Krishnabai. She had to be toiling in the kitchen almost single-handed. The number of visitors continued to increase daily. To cook for and serve them was a most arduous task. Further, Krishnabai had not yet been relieved of the pain which she had got as a result of the injury to her backbone

sustained, in the Kasaragod Ashram. All the time, however, she was showing wonderful patience and fortitude. On occasions, one noticed her lying down quite still, sideways, on a long narrow mat, unable to move owing to the intense pain she felt in all parts of her body. She would be in that position for about half an hour or so, and then she would get up to resume her work, as though nothing had happened to her. The Ashram did not, as already stated, engage any paid servants during this period. The object was that the Sadhakas living there, and the visitors as well, may have the opportunity of doing Nishkama Seva, i.e., selfless service, for their own spiritual advancement. But the experiment was given up subsequently as a failure.

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Once, Ramdas took a vow of silence for ten days. He explained the true meaning and purpose of silence in these words, on that occasion: "Silence means conservation of mental and physical energy, with a view to tune your will with the Divine will and plan. All powers have their source in God. When you meditate on Him, observing external silence with internal peace, the flood-gates of immortal joy and power within you are opened and they flow out of you in all their glory."

Just before entering the silence, Ramdas also gave a written message to the Ashramites, which ran as follows:—

"Beloved all, - Ramdas is observing silence for no reason but that God so wills it, in order to serve His own purpose, which is always for good. Please do not take it amiss. In this universal Lila of His, there is always ebb and flow, rise and fall, lull and storm. God wills

that this child of His should hold his tongue for some days in order to ride the coming storms. The Lord commands him to conserve his energy for a supreme effort. Silence is but a means to that end. There is, no doubt, as much potency in silence as in talk — in special cases, perhaps, even more than in talk.

"Ramdas declares, so that all of you may realise it, that if there is anyone amongst us who has renounced everything she owned, in the selfless service of God, it is Krishnabai. By saying this, Ramdas does not at all intend to lower the ideal of self-sacrifice followed by others or their achievement. Each is great in his or her own place. But the power that Krishnabai wields is surely something unique and all-embracing. Ramdas is her child. May we all rally round her and be united in love and joy! Pray do not misunderstand her and do not misunderstand one another.

"Above all, Ramdas appeals to every devotee in Ramnagar not to forget to chant the name of God as much as possible. Let pure love that knows no difference, rise in floods in Ramnagar and spread all over the world. May the Lord's Name be ever praised!

Ever the servant of you all,
Ramdas"

From his early life Ramdas has been fond of growing vegetables. So a vegetable garden was raised behind the Ashram buildings, and it was a joy for all Ashramites to pluck vegetables when they were ready. The evenings were spent almost exclusively in this work. Since then, vegetable growing has been a regular feature of Ashram activity. There was also a flower garden, mostly growing roses. Krishnabai had a happy time when distributing the vegetables and flowers among the

neighbours. In such work of distribution, Ramdas cannot find a parallel to her. She is, indeed, a great river! Her heart is immeasurably big and her hand is infinitely bounteous!

One day, while plucking vegetables, Ramdas had a fall and got a pretty severe cut on one of his knees and a lot of blood flowed from it. Since that incident, Krishnabai has imposed a ban on Ramdas' going to the vegetable garden for work. So he used to look at the plants from a distance and feel satisfied. Once he was tempted to go round the garden, but resisted for fear of being taken to task by Krishnabai.

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In the early years of the Ashram, Ramdas read to the inmates a few appreciations of Krishnabai sent by visitors. Referring to her, Ramdas said: "When we daily handle a diamond, we cease to properly appreciate its value. So it is with our attitude to Krishnabai. Because she is very near to us, we do not sufficiently realise her greatness. But people who come from afar fully know it."

SRI BHAGAVAN'S GRACE AND NAME

Sri Ramana Maharshi was in all respects a remarkable saint. After realising the Eternal, he lived in the Eternal. His advent was a veritable blessing on this earth.

By his contact thousands were saved from the clutches of doubt and sorrow. He lived what he preached and preached what he lived. He exerted a wonderful influence and created in the hearts of ignorant men

and women a consciousness of their inherent Divinity. He awakened the sleeping soul to the awareness of its immortal and all-blissful nature. By his very presence he rid the hearts of people of their base and unbridled passions. The faithful derived the greatest benefit by communion with him.

Ramdas thinks it will not be inappropriate to recall here his own experiences, thirty years ago, at Tiruvannamalai, and to describe how, by having Darshan of Sri Ramana Maharshi, he was prepared for the Universal Vision he had a few days afterwards on the sacred Arunachala Hill. It came about in this way. Soon after Ramdas had the Sagun Darshan of God in the form of Sri Krishna, he left Mangalore, as prompted by the Lord, and went about wandering from place to place. In the course of these wanderings, God in His own mysterious way took Ramdas to Tiruvannamalai. Ramdas' condition those days was like that of a child, waiting always for the mother's guidance. He had absolutely no Sankalpas or plans of any sort. So when a Tamilian Sadhu asked Ramdas to accompany him to Tiruvannamalai, Ramdas readily obeyed and simply followed the Sadhu. The latter took him to Sri Ramana Maharshi. The very sight of the Maharshi left an indelible impression on Ramdas. Ramana Maharshi stands for Nirguna Brahman and Universal Vision. So he poured into Ramdas, the necessary power and grace to obtain this vision.

After obtaining Maharshi's Darshan, Ramdas went up the Arunachala Hill and remained there in a cave. During his stay in the cave, Ramdas was chanting Rām-Mantra day and night. He had absolutely no sleep and for food he used to take only a small quantity of boiled

rice, which he himself prepared out of the alms he got. After twenty days' stay in the cave, in the above manner, one morning Ramdas' eyes were filled with a strange dazzling light and he realised the Presence of the Divine everywhere. This new vision of the Universal gave him such waves of ecstatic Bliss that he started running about here and there on the hill, embracing trees and rocks, shouting in joy 'This is my Ram, this is my Ram'! He could not resist the rising ecstasy. This was his first experience of Universal Vision.

Saints are beacons. They show the path to mankind. The influence of saints and sages like Ramana Maharshi cannot be lost on the world. India is a chosen country, a land of religion. She is already roused and alert. She is fast shaking off her lethargy. By the blessing and power of our innumerable saints and Rishis, India shall rise as a spiritual luminary to dispel the dark forces of chaos and destruction and restore a reign of concord, unity and peace among the nations of the earth. In carrying out this mission, India's weapon shall be Universal Love. Her ideals are based on Universal Vision. Hence her motto should be the Name or the Universal God.

The Divine Name is pregnant with a great power to transform the world. It can create light where there is darkness, love where there is hate, order where there is chaos, and happiness where there is misery. The Name can change the entire atmosphere of the world from one of bitterness, ill-will and fear to that of mutual love, goodwill and trust. For, the Name is God Himself. To bring nearer the day of human liberation from the sway of hatred and misery, the way is the recognition of the supremacy of God over all things and keep-

ing the mind in tune with the Universal by the chanting of the Divine Name. With this object mainly in view, Ramdas has started a Nama-Likhit-Japa-Yajna in which he invites all devotees to take part. May the nectar of the Divine Name flow in ceaseless streams through the hearts of all and usher in an age of harmony, brotherhood and peace in the world!

HOW TO WIN A SAINT'S GRACE

Saints, among whom the Maharshi was a unique one, are the saviours of mankind. They are the awakeners of the human Spirit. Having realised God they always live and act in Him. Hence they are able to kindle the divine spark in every one who comes into contact with them. They are thus the great liberators by whose help man can cross the sea of Samsara. With rare exception, as in the case of Sri Ramana, it is only by the touch of a God-realised soul, that a person begins to tread the spiritual path and find inner peace. All the scriptures alike stress the value of Satsang or association with Mahatmas. They make us aware of our true nature. It is by the Kripa of a saint that a fallen soul is regenerated and set on the path. The stories of Narada, Valmiki, St. Paul, Jagai and Madhai tell us how by a saint's contact those who were leading a low and sinful life were wonderfully transformed and raised to the summit of spiritual realisation. But we see that not all who meet a saint are at once changed or elevated. That is because the Kripa of a saint begins to work on a person only when the latter is psychologically ready, as willed by the Divine, to receive and benefit by it.

The saint's touch no doubt awakens the sleeping

spirit. But the aspirant has to walk a long distance by himself before he reaches the goal of life. To get established in the consciousness of the Divine he must regularly practise self-discipline, following a system of Sadhana to tune the mind with the Infinite — the great Truth dwelling within him — by meditation, by ceaseless remembrance of God and surrender to His will. This he will be able to do only if he has a real thirst for spiritual liberation and the necessary spirit of Vairagya or distaste for worldly pleasures. Then alone he can concentrate his mind on the supreme quest of life and devote all his energies to God. Merely running after saints, without a burning aspiration to attain the highest, will not produce the expected result.

A caution has to be uttered also to those who stay long in the company of saints, serving them. The association is indeed valuable. But it must be of the right kind. The contact must be internal. Otherwise, there is the danger of the aspirant's mind getting externalised and remaining attached to the person of the saint, missing the impersonal Truth which the saint's life embodies and which constitutes his glory. Without reaching the depths of the inner Reality represented by the saint, the aspirant cannot reap the full benefits of Satsang. One must take care not to fall into the error of thinking that a saint's grace or Kripa can be won by merely adoring and serving his person without looking upon all beings as his expressions and adoring them with an equal vision. There is nothing more harmful to a spiritual aspirant than a narrow, personal or partisan attitude. His progress depends on the extent to which he is able to universalise his outlook and expand his heart.

The Guru or God is the all-pervading Atman. He dwells in all. He is the inner guide and enlightener. His injunction to the disciples is: "Seek and find Me first in yourself and then as everybody and everything. I reside in the hearts of all. To love and serve them is to love and serve Me." A saint's grace can come only by developing this universal outlook.

THE ROLE OF SAINTS

Saints, incarnations and prophets come from age to age in different lands to deliver the message of unity, harmony and peace for the regeneration of mankind. They sow the precious seeds of universal love and brotherhood.

God acts through human beings to fulfil His divine purpose and plan. He uses for this those who have surrendered themselves to His will and made themselves fit instruments for His work. They are the chosen ones who shed divine light, love and peace in a world that is darkened with ignorance, bitterness and strife. Such are the saints who have realised God, whose minds are illumined with the universal vision and whose hearts are overflowing with universal love. It is by them that the world is redeemed and men are inspired to walk along the path of righteousness.

The world is at present passing through a critical period of its history. Momentous changes are coming in the affairs of mankind. The civilisation, which was once held to be of a very high order and believed to be an ideal achievement for all time, is today crumbling to pieces. The lessons that the present situation holds for mankind are that unbridled lust for earthly power and

possession leads to strife and war and that selfishness, pride and greed, whether among individuals or nations, cause widespread suffering and misery. There is going on now a necessary reshuffling of the values of life.

The struggle everywhere is at bottom a struggle of the human Spirit against the rising tide of materialism, against men's ambition for earthly dominion and the glory attached to power. We can clearly see through it all the working of the omnipotent will of the Divine. Out of the travail and suffering through which the world is passing today, a new order is bound to emerge, based on a widespread awakening to the knowledge of the universal Spirit.

This high ideal cannot be achieved by the efforts of statesmen, diplomats and politicians who lack experience of the highest Truth and whose vision is warped by considerations of personal, national or racial self-interest. The transformation can be brought about only by the divinely inspired and illumined saints and sages who are perfectly selfless, whose heart is filled with pure love for all. Their vision is truly universal, as they have gone beyond all barriers of race, religion, and nationality and their loyalty is solely to Truth or God. So they are the persons who can rightly guide the destinies of mankind and establish world-unity and peace on a lasting basis.

What are the chief characteristics of saints? In answer, Ramdas must say that *Samadarshan* - equal vision — is the dominant trait that marks them out from ordinary human beings. It is the keynote of their lives. They see God in all and love all alike. Hence their outlook on life is of rare value and significance to the world. Their mission in the world is to help the weak,

to relieve all forms of sufferings and distress and spiritually elevate all those who go to them. While human beings, in general, are obsessed by an individualistic outlook, which is based on their sense of separation from others, saints and sages who have realised the Truth display an universal outlook in their thoughts, words and deeds.

Selflessness, born of this equal vision and sense of spiritual identity with all created beings and things, is another characteristic of saints. They are ever conscious of an immortal and all-blissful state of existence and so are totally free from the fear of death which terrorises ordinary men. Their sublime transcendence from the lower plane to the consciousness of an eternal life is revealed in their teachings which ever harp upon the one theme of Immortality, God or Truth. They hold that life is eternal and that every soul is essentially Divine. Their equal vision, having demolished all the limitations set by the lower mind, ever seeks union and oneness with the imperishable and omnipresent Spirit inherent in all the varied expressions of life. They carry with them the glow of spiritual splendour which always radiates from their person. They preach to congregations of men the greatness of that attainment which is the glory of their life. People crowd around them and become their followers, love, adore and worship them. By their contact the aspiring souls, who strive to be free from the trammels of ignorance, are lifted up to their own divine status.

Such great Teachers of the divine life have never been absent in the world. Mankind owes to them the heights to which it has reached in religion, philosophy, art, poetry and literature on one side, and the development

of the great qualities of the heart — like selfless love, charity, compassion and fellowship — on the other. Truly, the world would be hurled into chaos, if these men and women of spiritual vision were not born from time to time. It is their invincible influence that keeps in check the brutal instincts in man and creates an atmosphere of love, peace and goodwill. All glory to them!

THE GLORY OF SRI HANUMAN

Sri Hanumanji is the greatest devotee of Sri Ram. He worshipped Lord Rama with the attitude of a servant and by the servant-Master attitude he attained such a lofty plane in the spiritual sphere that, when he was once asked by Lord Rama as to who he was, he could boldly reply, "As body, I am Your humble servant, O Lord!, as an individual, I am a part of You, and as the Supreme Soul, I am Yourself!"

Let us remember that if we can become His real servant, He will absorb us in His own resplendant being and raise us to His status. To become His servant is to do everything as commanded by Him and to chant His name constantly. These were the only two Sadhanas that Sri Hanumanji did and with these he could rise to spiritual heights and become the greatest servant of the Lord! Now he is being worshipped by one and all in innumerable temples and homes. He has shown to the world how one can become a real servant of God.

We must all keep Sri Hanumanji as our ideal and strive to become servants of God. Let us humble ourselves to nothing and do everything as His service and keep His name always on our tongue. By repeating Ramnam constantly we become the Das or servant of

Ram.

Ramdas was born on Sri Hanuman Jayanti day. This fact he was not aware of until he took up Sannyas and became a real Das of Ram at the bank of the river Kaveri. Ram prompted him then to assume the name 'Ramdas'. It was later that he came to know that Ram gave him this name as he was born on the day of the greatest Das of Ram and that therefore he was to be His Das for all the years to come.

Hanumanji was an ideal Brahmachari — an absolute celibate. Those who aspire to be life-long celibates worship Hanumanji to invoke his help and strength to maintain celibacy. Those who repeat Ramnam constantly are sure to attain inner purity and remain pure celibates. By such repetition, they will become free from the desires of the senses — free from lust, greed and wrath. We have heard that even the body of Hanumanji was made adamant by the very power of Ramnam, and became immortal. As Atman every one is, of course, immortal, but Hanumanji got an immortal body too!

So, let us all pray humbly to God: "O Lord! By Your grace may we have Your holy name on our tongue constantly, and may we be transformed into Your very being! May we attain eternal union with You, and in a state of Para-bhakti may we serve You in Your world-manifestations, as Hanumanji served You!"

SHAKTI OR DIVINE MOTHER

THE DIVINE MOTHER

You walk into a flower garden and are struck by the rare beauty of a flower. You walk into the forest and are attracted by the charming foliage of a particular tree. You look up at the heavens and are fascinated by the unique brilliance of a star. You observe a group of birds and are entranced by the sight of one with a gorgeous plume among them. So also in the world of gods and men you behold and come under the benign spell of the living image of the Mother Divine and you adore Her.

The Mother is the ministering Angel who has descended to the earth for the uplift and regeneration of humanity. Her touch transmutes, and Her sight elevates and Her presence purifies the very atmosphere. Her heart is ever throbbing with compassion for all lives and creatures. Her mission is to heal all pain and relieve every form of suffering. She showers Her grace on all alike. Her words drop gently from Her lips as though they are pearls. Ego She has none but immense are Her works. She is infinite love.

The Mother leads Her erring children on the true path that points to eternal felicity. By Her smile She converts them all into free and blissful beings. Her glance surcharged with tenderness drives away their fear and infuses sweetness into their lives. She awakens them to the consciousness of their childhood and of Her own

motherhood.

True children are those who take Her as the only Mother, looking to Her for all things and depending upon Her in all ways. Although appearing to be limited by time and space, She is the visible expression of the Immortal Essence — a very form of Divine Omnipotence; even as such She is everlasting.

The Mother embodies the radiance of eternity. Her knowledge is all-comprehensive. Her love is all-embracing. Her activity is vast and universal. She says to Her child:-

“You are Mine. You have sprung from Me. My being is bliss. Your being is likewise bliss. You are the heir of My power and glory. I dwell in you. I have assumed your shape and form. Play on My child, realising your eternal kinship and identity with Me. I am all the worlds. I am the divine force that controls all things in the universe. You are My child. Know this and be content.”

The Mother is shedding Her mercy abundantly on the world all through its peaceful as well as troublous times. The child who opens itself to receive Her grace is filled with divine ambrosia.

The Mother is the supreme deity. The Mother is love. The Mother is mercy. The Mother is joy. The Mother is the one great refuge. The Mother is the sole redeemer and saviour. I bow to the Mother. By earning Her grace I have become Her free and playful child.

MOTHER IS ALL IN ALL

Truly, when we become the smallest children of the Divine Mother, we merge our little individuality in Her

cosmic personality. Here we realise that the Mother and the child are one. Here again, if we wish to do so, we can, in our play as children, keep basking in the sunshine of Her divine grace and protection. Mother is no mother, if, not understanding Her in Her true light, we do not submit to Her will and guidance in all matters. Really, what She wills is ever for our good. Revolt against Her will, always knocks out of us a good deal of strength and peace. This Divine Mother is the heart of our heart and the soul of our soul. Being universal, She is the supreme deity, ever having Her place and seat within us. Her revelation of the world phenomena is simply marvellous. Her sweet and gracious presence, Her smiling face, Her ever-guiding and protecting hand are seen everywhere. Her dazzling form is the sole attraction for our eyes. Her melodious and soothing voice is the most charming music for our ears. To do all things in Her name and for Her sake, is the most blissful service we can render. Oh, the Mother is our all in all. May Her light shine on the world! May it ever draw in the hearts of all creatures, and awaken them to the knowledge of Her invincibility and all-beneficent existence and power!

GOD AND HIS SHAKTI

God is the eternal, changeless, motionless witness. He is Shiva, the ever-blissful. Shakti is His will — an expression of God in motion. It is named variously — Prana, Manas, Buddhi, Prakriti or Maya.

Light as the radiation of the sun is not different from the sun. Ice as a form of water is not different from water. So also Shakti or Will is not different

from God. They are the two aspects of the same Truth. Shakti is the universe of names and forms. It is God in a state of motion, and therefore it is not different from Him.

The same serpent is in motion and at rest. But, like all analogies, this analogy too is true only in part. For, while the serpent at rest and the serpent in motion are two *successive* conditions of the same serpent, God is, *at once, simultaneously*, both at rest and in motion. Motion denotes name and form, and when motion ceases, there is neither name nor form — and vice versa.

We say, God is at once the doer and the non-doer. As Will or Shakti, He is the doer; as the Eternal Witness, He is the non-doer. To know motion only is not enough. We have to know also motionlessness. Then alone we know the Truth. Therefore to see motion in motionlessness and motionlessness in motion is to see the Truth.

Shakti, Prana, or Prakriti signifies vibration or motion. Forms emerge out of this vibration. A slight commotion manifests itself as ripples on the placid surface of water. The forms of ripples did not exist before. They appeared as a result of the disturbance or motion and will last only as long as the motion lasts. All forms are but expressions of motion or power — Shakti in action.

A form is only a manifestation of the formless. Motion is only of what was once motionless. So the Truth is both with form and without form. It is both moving and motionless. Purusha is the static or motionless aspect and Prakriti is the dynamic or motion aspect of the same Truth.

God is thus *at once* the active and the inactive, the

dynamic and the static principle. He Himself is the Player and Witness of the play. God and the Universe are one — not two.

SURRENDER TO THE MOTHER

Self-surrender is a state in which the thought of God runs in the mind in a ceaseless and continuous stream. So, constant remembrance and meditation of God automatically lead to self-surrender. What comes in the way of one's achieving it is the ego-sense. An unbroken contemplation of God alone can dispel this by the merging of it into the infinite Truth, which one aspires to attain.

Live in the consciousness that you are one with the ultimate Truth and that all your activities are inherently guided and controlled by a divine power. During meditation, you have, of course, to pray for strength, patience and peace, and mentally hand yourself over entirely into the keeping of the supreme Lord. The divine consciousness, in the first stages of your Sadhana, cannot be a continuous experience. Your struggle consists in trying to be totally possessed by this consciousness. By means of intense aspiration and persevering endeavour you will certainly be able to attain to this blessed state.

Giving up all fears and anxieties, you should entirely resign yourself to the Mother. "Her will be done"! Let this be your motto. Take it, that whatever She determines about you is always for the best; because She knows what is good for you. Even the worst circumstances, which you and the world would look upon as such, are really invaluable boons from the Mother.

SHAKTI OR DIVINE MOTHER

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When the Divine Mother knows how to take care of you and to train you up to a true and enlightened life, to ask Her to do things in a particular way, as you wish, is not only superfluous but is also ill-advised and presumptuous. Frequently, it happens that in your ignorance and short-sightedness, you pray for things that are harmful to you.

Your standards of right and wrong, and conceptions of the true values of life, however intelligent and well reasoned out, are imperfect and improper. So think of Her and Her alone, and abandon all thoughts of anxiety and worry. Self-surrender or submission to the will of the Mother, means perfect calmness of mind and a state of complete acceptance of whatever She determines about you. Here, fear, anxiety and impatience have no place. If you trust Her in the same way as a child trusts its mother, then where is room for insistent appeals for Her help? The Mother is sure to protect the child from every harm and danger. Have this faith firmly fixed in your mind, and resting whole-heartedly on the Mother, be ever calm and peaceful.

THE DIVINE SHAKTI

Universal vision means to behold the Divine in the manifestation. Everything is really the image of Ram Himself, which means Ram has assumed all forms and He plays in and as them in various ways. Ram is an absolute, nameless and formless Reality, and also the Power active in and revealed as the universal manifestation. The latter aspect is His divine Shakti.

Surrender to this Shakti grants you the knowledge of Ram in His impersonal being. If you are entirely

possessed by Divine Shakti, you reveal the inherent glory of your real existence. This will, no doubt, reduce your ego to nothing. You do not then become a tool in the hands of egoistic power, but you realise that you are the very expression of Shakti who works from within you. Now you attain an individuality which is of an exalted, divinised and supremely blissful nature.

The path of surrender is very simple. "Not my will but Thy will, O Lord, that prevails at all times." Really all things happen by His will alone. You have to apply this principle to all events that take place in your lives. It is by His power that we perform all actions. When we realise this we attain to bliss and freedom.

Constant remembrance of the Divine is the sure way that leads to complete self-surrender. Ramdas always emphasises the need of repeating the name of God constantly, for by this practice the mind is elevated and brought into tune with the Divine Consciousness.

This is the easiest way. Can you not feel that you are a child of God — He as your Mother? The Mother is the sole power that controls the entire universe. She dwells in your heart and everywhere about you. You are ever basking in the sunshine of Her grace. She watches and protects you in every way from within and without. She is all love, power and bliss. Her child always inherits Her greatness and glory, because She dwells in it and has become its very life and being. Remembrance of the Mother for the child means the realisation of its identity with Her. So the child is at once one with and different from the Mother. Such a child ever lives in a state of divine ecstasy. All its actions turn into playful expressions of the Divine — a blissful and spontaneous outflow from the Source. Be a child

of the Mother. Look to Her for everything.

A spiritual aspirant should not discard woman and gold but he has to change his attitude towards them, i.e., he should not enslave them or allow himself to be enslaved by them. He should look upon them as the manifestations of the Divine Power. Ramdas for one does not believe that woman is in any way the cause of man's ruin. He ruins himself by his foolish attachments to the perishable objects of life, thereby denying the supremacy of the Divine Spirit over everything in this world. In fact, woman becomes the liberator of man if he looks upon her as the form of the Divine Mother. Ramdas worships woman as a veritable Goddess and uses gold for Her service in humanity.

INDIA AND HER PROBLEMS

GOD IS THE GUIDE

A friend desires that Ramdas should, in the present article, deal with a pressing problem which confronts Indians at the present day. Ramdas can attempt to find solution to all problems only from a spiritual standpoint. God is at the basis of the world manifestation and by His will alone all activities take place in it. Bearing this supreme truth in mind let us try to throw light upon the question — what should be our attitude towards and conduct in the matter of communal riots that have broken out in several important provinces of India? Intolerance, prejudice and hatred are the causes of these outbursts of violence. Mutual trust, friendship and understanding can alone allay the fires of fanaticism and hate that burn in the hearts of the rioters. We hear the tales of indiscriminate killing and destruction of buildings and properties by the rioters. This is the work of demoniac forces that seek to subvert order and harmony and create discord and chaos. Under the circumstances, how should a devotee and servant of God, who finds himself in the area affected by riots, behave? In all matters, the true criterion for his conduct is the inspiration he derives from his communion with the Divine. In the above case he may adopt any one of the four ways given here.

He may, for himself, calmly offer his life in a non-violent spirit to the knife of the rioter. He may also give his life as a sacrifice in preventing the destruction of other

lives — all in a non-violent way. But this is the method of approach of the ascetic or the *tyagi*. This cannot always be the standard of action for God's servant and lover who is a householder and an active member of society. To such a one there are three alternatives to choose from, to meet the situation.

To seek the help of the Government or any recognised body of protectors of public life and interests.

Should the above resources fail or there is no time to get aid from either of them, there is the second course open. The servant of God is the friend of humanity. He is the guardian of their welfare. As such he can conserve all the available physical and moral forces at his command and put up a stiff defensive fight against those who fall upon innocent and harmless people, either in his own house or in the houses of his neighbours. To fight in a righteous cause has a divine sanction. To fight for such a cause does not mean to be wantonly cruel, vindictive and aggressive. Deliberate assaults out of revenge and hate are born of the lower nature of man. We hear of such reprehensible acts of cruelty. They degrade man and reduce him to the state of the beast.

When the number and strength of the aggressors are over-powering and the defenders know that they cannot withstand the attack, they can have recourse even to the third way, namely, to quietly migrate to some safe area and remain there until peace and order is restored in their own places. To take this step is not an act of cowardice, as it would appear. While unarmed men, women, aged people, children and invalids are involved, to transport them to a place of security is a perfectly proper and reasonable course.

• Yet there is another great way. Convert your enemy

into a friend by the alchemy of Love. Be so surcharged with the power of Love that you can transform human nature from the lower to the higher — from the animal to the Divine. This is the work of God-intoxicated saints who are saviours of mankind.

God fulfils Himself in various ways. Realising his unity with Him, let man be an instrument in His hands. Let him live and act in consonance with His will. God works always for peace and harmony. Be you His soldier, ever ready to suffer and even sacrifice your life in His service which is the service of humanity, in whatever form He inspires you to do it. God is the beginning, middle and end of all things. He is Love supreme. Love is the great guide, protector and refuge.

INDIA — ARISE !

The time has arrived for India to conserve and release her immense spiritual power to counteract a mighty destructive force which is striving to subdue and dominate the human race. India is a land of many religions and has given birth to a galaxy of saints and sages. The divine heritage which has been handed down to the present generation from India's hoary past is abounding with infinite possibilities for good. India is the mother who fosters under her care various races and faiths. The time has come when the children of this sacred soil should rouse themselves up and unite in peace and harmony for invoking divine help and grace for extinguishing the blazing conflagration of war which is causing incalculable disaster and havoc in the world.

Real political, social and economic progress and freedom in the life of nations can depend only upon the

spiritual awakening and the realisation of unity of mankind. The recognition of the spiritual values of life can alone knit people with people and bring harmony and goodwill on the earth. The liberation and peace of the individual is surely based upon his or her contribution towards the collective human happiness and harmony.

Every man and woman is a store-house of inexhaustible spiritual energy. Only this latent energy has to be made manifest. India must give up her indifference and lay aside her lesser preoccupations and stand up united in the glory of a divine revelation to guide mankind along the path of mutual co-operation, love and goodwill. The Spiritual Power is omnipotent. The way is to propitiate and raise the Power and make it shed its beneficent light and peace upon mankind. India should purify and elevate her heart to make it throb in unison with this universal Power — God. Prayer is the most efficacious means. Let a tremendous wave of pure and selfless devotion and aspiration rise from the heart of India towards the immanent and transcendent God. India knows fully the miraculous power of prayer. All the more wonderful is its work when it starts simultaneously from the hearts of millions for achieving a world-unifying purpose. For, prayer releases an invincible Divine Power that stands for righteousness, harmony and peace. World-adjustment along various other lines have been tried without abiding results. True and lasting peace and freedom of humanity can be possible only when its affairs are controlled and set in the light and realisation of the inner Spiritual Kingdom which is at the basis of this world manifestation.

Now, what is the practical course to be adopted by India to utilise, for the good of humanity, her latent

spiritual potentialities? People of all religions and sects in India can join in their own way, in this great and urgent task of conquering the dehumanising spirit of hate and greed rampant in the atmosphere of the present day, and of disseminating the soothing grace of Divine Love and Kindness. Let a day in a week be appointed on which congregational or individual prayers are offered to the Almighty in every temple, mosque, church, Ashram, Math and home. In this universal prayer, let Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and others freely participate. God of all religions is one — the same Merciful Master of the worlds. Appeal made to Him with a heart longing for the uplift of mankind is bound to bring about a transformation in its outlook and illumine its mentality. Prayer purifies, softens and ennobles the human heart. By its power we can certainly avert the impending world-catastrophe. We hear of the wails of countless human beings in the throes of agony in the battle-field of Europe and elsewhere. A veritable orgy of slaughter and bloodshed is going on, on a vast scale. Humanity has suffered long and suffered intensely. Let every heart melt in the fire of this terrible dance of death and reveal the glory of the Spirit so that His grace and power may prevail on this earth to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. It is high time for God to come to the rescue — God seated in the heart of mankind — God of peace, compassion and love.

Let every Indian dedicate the enlightened powers of his or her head and heart for liberating the world from the grip of strife, war and misery. The two eminent signatories of the appeal "On The Brink", published in our last issue, have sounded the clarion call to India to make a great spiritual endeavour to stem this

Asuric tide that threatens to engulf the entire mankind, and instead to usher in the era of peace and goodwill among the nations of the earth. By Divine Grace all things are possible. May God guide India and use her as an instrument to fulfil His plan of regeneration of mankind!

FREEDOM AND SPIRITUALITY

Man who is not inwardly free, though possessing all the wealth and the power of the world, is only a creature who dominates, exploits and enslaves his fellow-men. So, true freedom is of the Spirit. India should aim, in the first place, at a freedom of this nature so that she can make it the basis for her political freedom. Following upon a wave of discontent and disappointment which now sweeps over the country, a wave of spiritual awakening should rise and surcharge the hearts of Indians with the consciousness of their spiritual unity and strength. If not, the political freedom that is gained will only make India a nation imperialistic and fascist in its outlook by its copying the disastrous methods employed by the western nations. This is the reason why the saints of India of the present and the last two or three generations strike a warning note against the rage among the children of our sacred soil to imitate blindly the western socio-political systems.

India has a great mission to perform in the present day warring world. She should, casting off her unnatural caste, creed, communal and party differences, and standing united under the flag of the Divine Spirit that dwells alike in the hearts of them all, show to the world that true peace, harmony and equality can be

achieved only by conquering the brutal nature which ordinarily controls human beings and by revealing the inherent spiritual nature.

A world federation worth the name can be founded on the knowledge of the unity and oneness of mankind. A new order beneficial to all people on this earth can evolve only from such a federation. Freedom of humanity lies along this path and no other. The nations which are engaged in the present terrible conflict are all said to be free nations, but what are they doing? They fight, kill and lay waste, and they say they do so in the name of and for the sake of freedom. Here there is freedom not to mutually cooperate, develop brotherly feelings and unitedly work for the common weal and happiness. We see that freedom is being used with a view to tyrannise, enslave, destroy and create widespread distress and misery in the world. India can never dream of using the political freedom, which she is struggling to achieve, for these baneful purposes.

God of the Hindu, God of the Muslim, God of the Christian and God of all other sects and creeds that inhabit India, is the same God of love, compassion and peace. He is called by different names. Then, why should Indians, recognising this truth, not cultivate fraternal feelings towards each other and consolidate their efforts for bringing about world-peace and harmony?

It is only the power of God that can allay the raging fires of war and create a calm and tranquil atmosphere in which mutual goodwill among nations can prevail.

Therefore let India, in the name of the ancient Rishis, Teachers, Prophets and Saints, realise her essential spiritual unity and hold forth the torch of universal love and peace to the entire world. Let the light radiating

from this torch dispel from the heart of man the darkness of hate and awaken the light of Love.

Let India not do anything to tarnish her fair name. Let her be noble, brave and radiant, imbued with faith in the ultimate triumph of truth, justice and peace over the forces of evil. May the Divine Guide inspire and lead her to the fulfilment of her spiritual mission in the world!

THE PROBLEM OF THE DAY

A Hindu friend writes:—

“When evil forces are looming large trying to engulf Hindus, when women and children are being murdered in cold blood and hearths and homes burned, when our intellectual stalwarts of unquestionable integrity advise the Hindus to die tamely like rats at the hands of Pakistanis, and when the Government have utterly failed to put down this utter wickedness and lawlessness — what is the duty of every Hindu, wherever he may be? Is it or is it not his clear duty to kill his enemies to protect his hearth and home? Is it or is it not his duty to help his brothers, wherever they may be, in defending against the evil forces led by Pakistanis? Since our Government and leaders have utterly failed us, is it not time that our Saints and Sages dislodged themselves from their seclusion? At this critical juncture, what are our Saints and Sages doing in their seclusion? What purpose does it serve to profess a philosophy which cannot be translated into every day life? Has God exhausted His patience and so has He left us to stew in our own juice?”

Reply:—

Referring to your letter, Ramdas can say this. The great religious teachers of the world have preached that a true servant and devotee of God should fight against ignorance, wherever it is found, which has given rise to the evils — hate, greed and wrath. There is, at present, a great upheaval of these evils all over the earth. So your aim should be to put down or eradicate this ignorance by spiritual and physical strength developed to the utmost capacity. The evils spoken of above are rampant in all communities, nations and peoples of the world. Hence you cannot fight on the side of one community against another. Hindus are as much culpable of wanton cruelty and destruction born of hate and greed as any other community. You have heard of Bihar and Calcutta tragedies in which Hindus played a most reprehensible part. Again you know how Hindu merchants, landlords, and zemindars, who have hoarded food grains for black marketeering, are responsible for the agony of millions of Indians who are dying by inches, as it were, through starvation.

Saints and sages do not side with any race, creed or party. They raise the standard of revolt against all that is low, mean, tyrannous and selfish in human nature. They always espouse the cause of righteousness as against unrighteousness by taking their stand beyond the sense of all divisions and distinctions created by ignorant, narrow and self-centred men. The saints, true to their spiritual realisation, which is universal in its significance, do surely dedicate every iota of their lives to the task of dispelling the blinding ignorance in human beings which is the sole cause of strife, exploitation, bloodshed and war. How could you then expect that they should take up

arms on the side of Hindus only and fight the Muslims or any other community?

The true vision is the universal vision. Therefore the true standpoint is the universal standpoint. A man who is illumined with this supreme knowledge and has attained this status holds the life of all beings and creatures in the innumerable worlds comprising the universe with equal importance. Before the man reaches this summit of spiritual experience he might identify himself with humanity as a whole, as a necessary stage in his evolution, and, feeling for their sufferings, exert himself in the work of bringing relief to them. This falls under the category of humanitarianism which is indeed a great force in the world for good. But for a man to be partial to a community or nation for the simple reason that he happens to belong to it, and fight against others for the great ideals of truth and justice, while in his own fold there are people who are given to unrighteousness, is not at all the right path. To expect saints to conduct themselves as communalists or party leaders is preposterous.

Ramdas is not for absolute non-violence. When Hindu or Muslim families are being butchered in cold blood, men who are strong, brave and intelligent, bereft of communal leaning or bias, are fully justified in joining hands to drastically prevent such occurrences or even kill, if need be, those who are responsible for this insane destruction. To give a concrete instance: when a Hindu group is recklessly torturing and slaughtering helpless Muslim women and children, you should stand by the latter and protect them from the savagery of the Hindus.

Sri Krishna has spoken in His clarion and unmis-

takable voice and shown by example how to act in such situations. First, have recourse to peaceful methods and if they fail, to violence by all means. *Saama* — conciliation, *daana* — gifts, *bheda* — reprimand, *danda* — chastisement: these words signify the ways to be adopted when dealing with people who are guided by their degrading lower nature and become a source of misery in society. For the incorrigible and bloodthirsty *Asura*, in whichever camp he is found, the last is the only course.

TRUTH MUST TRIUMPH

India is passing through a grave crisis. The ruthless slaughter of people has been going on in several parts of it. Communal frenzy and religious fanaticism have been responsible for the horrible crimes actuated by the spirit of hate and revenge. The countries of the West appear also to be heading towards another great and devastating conflict. In the circumstances, the faith of even the most hopeful optimist is likely to be shaken. People have come to question the goodness and mercy of the overruling God of the universe. It is when passing through this crucial test that the soul should still cling to God and continue to believe in His compassion and grace.

The old world and its unstable foundations of society, which stand for mutual illwill, strife and war, should be replaced by a new world of mutual love, goodwill and peace broad-based on truth and righteousness. What is true of a single individual in his struggle for attainment of inner tranquillity and happiness is true also of mankind comprised of such individuals. The process of regeneration of humanity is often attended with

cataclysmic changes brought about by the divine will, thereby leading it to the dawn of a united spiritual consciousness in the heart of the human race. Before such a state comes, hatred, malice and lust for destruction must leave the minds of men.

The *Asuras* or men prompted by their lower violent nature will have their time of mad and diabolic life and action. The *Asuric* force is always a spent force. It exhausts itself in fits of fury and violence. The light and power of Truth works steadily forward conquering the Asuric force until the divine will achieves complete triumph and an enlightened humanity comes into being. For hastening the advent of such an age of light, righteousness, love and fellowship, let us all lift up our hearts towards the Almighty Lord of the worlds and realise that within us dwells this Supreme Being and therefore we are His forms and expressions — ever one and united.

All unsolvable and difficult problems and conflicts in the world can be solved and remedied by the power and grace of God alone. God's aid comes to us when we look up and pray for it and prepare ourselves to receive it. There is no greater helper, redeemer and protector for all of us than God. The world-condition is so unhappy because man has forgotten God and allowed his destructive tendencies to produce world-wide havoc and disaster. Let us turn our minds and hearts towards the omnipotent Being who controls the destinies of the universe, and through His grace, revealed in us, establish peace, harmony and goodwill on earth.

WORLD-UNITY AND PEACE

ERA OF PEACE

Out of the great turmoil and chaos, caused by the present day wars, an era of peace, order and harmony will evolve. A calm and a lull will succeed a period of stress and storm. This is the law of Nature or God. The accumulated wisdom of ages should prevail in adjusting the affairs of mankind broad-based upon mutual love, co-operation and brotherhood. The lessons which the cataclysms, disasters and miseries that have come in the wake of the ruthless wars have taught humanity, cannot be forgotten. In the light of the past experience, nations will unite in ushering in an age of a new world-order of abiding peace and goodwill.

Such a great ideal cannot be achieved by the efforts of statesmen, diplomats and politicians. It is only the divinely inspired and illumined saints and sages of the world who can guide the destinies of mankind along right lines for establishing world-union and peace. It is the bankruptcy of spiritual values of life in the administration and government of nations that is responsible for the present state of discord and confusion. This is evident to all who can give even a passing thought to the present day world problems.

What is true of a small group life, such as a family or a community, is also true of nations and humanity as a whole. It is within the experience of everybody

that by the cultivation of mutual love, kindness and self-sacrifice alone, the members of a family, or a community are held together, and peace, prosperity and happiness reign among them. Admittedly same are the principles on which peace and harmony among mankind can also be founded, and they are the rays emanating from a consciousness of Divinity in man..

So long as a veil covers the splendour of the universal Spirit — God — living in the heart of a human being, the lower self asserts, and there is a scramble, strife and fight for earthly power, glory and riches. Now he is dominated over by an Asuric force, and he lives and acts in such a manner as to degrade himself to the level of the brute, and also to bring about widespread distress and destruction among his fellowmen. The remedy is to put down the lower self by revealing the light, power and joy of the Divine residing in his heart and in the hearts of all.

God alone can save the world by awakening humanity to a feeling of universal fellowship through the subdual of the narrow, selfish and individualistic instincts. So let our appeal for creating an atmosphere of peace, love and harmony through prayer, meditation and self-surrender touch the hearts of all people.

God is dwelling in every one of us, nay, He pervades all the worlds. Heart-contact with Him means salvation of the individual and therefore happiness of mankind. This is the only effective way to transform the face of earth, ugly and distorted as it is by the horrible wars, so that divine love may triumph for the supreme good of all people on it.

When grim situations spelling great disasters, such as the ones we are facing today, convulse the world,

we have no reason to give way to despair and panic. Let not a feeling of fear and helplessness seize our hearts and weaken our wills and reduce us to inaction. Let the mind be purified and disciplined through communion with God and let the hands and feet be active in the service of suffering humanity. Life is intended for attaining immortality and union with the Divine. Life, if it is not illumined with His radiance, and action, if it is not in consonance with His will, go only to add to the existing discord and disorder.

O friends, let us all join together, and with a singleness of aspiration and devotion, call upon the Supreme Master of the worlds to pour the soothing showers of His grace on the fires of lust, greed and wrath that are raging in the hearts of men who have drenched the bosom of our mother earth with the blood of millions of her children. The sincere supplications breaking out from our hearts that have melted at the sight of human agony and suffering shall be heard.

May God rule our lives! May God-thought permeate our minds! May God's light and power enlighten and control our affairs! May God reveal Himself in our hearts. May the will of God, who is Love, ever prevail!

OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

For the time being the forces of evil seem to get the upper hand, but Truth — God — does ultimately triumph. The Divine Power is far more potent than mere physical or brute force. The world is passing through a period of acute tribulation and agony. The work of destruction has become intenser and the lance

of death has assumed a grim and terrible aspect. Even then there is no cause for despair or pessimism.

It is the ordinance of God that an era of peace and harmony can dawn in the heart of humanity only after a period of tremendous stress, struggle and suffering. This law equally applies to the life of the individual. There can be no true progress, no true evolution in human life or all life without its facing and overcoming great obstacles and trials.

God's power works steadily and silently from within until at last it reveals itself in all its magnificence. The ugliness, the chaos and the confusion which the wars have created shall be replaced by beauty, peace and harmony. Whilst the mere intellectual and scientific attainments of man have produced various means of destroying human life and property, the spiritual heritage of man will soon assert itself and, by subduing the force of the lower nature, will bring into existence a world order that stands for progress, unity and happiness of mankind.

On the physical plane man is but an animal. On the intellectual plane he is a rational being. On the moral plane he is a power for good. On the spiritual plane he is a radiant being full of divine light, love and bliss. Humanity's ascent from one plane to the other is its natural movement.

The day of a new and harmonious adjustment in the relationship of nations for their mutual understanding, peace and goodwill is not distant. It is the will of the Almighty that every one of us should herald the coming of such a glorious day. The more we divest ourselves of the baser and Asuric tendencies and rise to the height of our divine nature, the better

vehicles we become for God to work through for the regeneration of mankind. It is by a purified heart alone we can, discover the immortal link that binds all members of the human race into one family of God. The sure way to attain self-purification is to tune our mind and heart with the Supreme Source of all goodness, light and love.

Verily, the realisation of the unity of mankind is the fruit of a spiritual experience. If we leave out God — the only unifying power — from our calculations, we will not attain real harmony and peace, however we may try in other ways to achieve this ideal. God's name is often taken in vain. God's help is sought to serve selfish ends and aims. Prayers are offered to Him to throw dust in the eyes of man. God is omniscient and omnipresent. He is the great illuminator and witness of everything that is going on on this planet and everywhere in the universe. He dispenses rewards of actions to individuals and nations according to their deserts. The pure, unselfish, noble and forgiving are the only chosen ones God appoints for bringing light and joy in the world.

So it behoves every one of us to reveal the divine splendour that dwells within us through prayer, meditation and selfless service. God has offered us the present opportunity to march on the path that leads to Him and make our lives blessed and also of others in the world. Prayers and meditation, apart from the beneficent effect they have upon the lives of others, form by themselves a most efficacious Sadhana for one's own spiritual advancement. In fact, constant communion with God opens in our heart a very fountain of unutterable peace, purity and joy.

Friends! let us stand up as the very embodiments of the Divine — really we are such — and spread everywhere God's power of grace and peace for dispelling the darkness and misery of war and for establishing the rule of righteousness, goodwill and peace on the earth. Victory be to God for ever and ever!

THE WAY TO WORLD-PEACE

Through prayer and meditation you are united with God in the silence of His Spirit and also in the supreme power of His love. God-contact purifies your heart and reveals His full glory within you — you are flooded with His light, peace and joy. God dwells in all beings and creatures.

Prayer and meditation open up a channel of communication with God so that His grace may fill you and transform your life into His very image. Now your being is vibrant with divine life and ecstasy. You radiate divine light and peace. You become a vehicle through whom God works spontaneously for the good of the world. Verily you are the very expression of God — God who is absolute goodness, love and peace. To be in tune with Him is to become like Him.

Human life is rich with the gifts which God has poured into it, for God Himself is at the source of all lives in the world. When the human soul merges in the cosmic soul — God, the disturbances in the external field of movement and activity are automatically controlled and harmonised. It is the inner equanimity that makes for a state of external calmness and serenity.

Humanity is now in the clutches of a terrible war

because it has failed to recognise the existence and supremacy of God who has created the world and all creatures in it. To deny Him and ignore your union and oneness with Him is to set free destructive forces in nature that cause havoc and misery in the world. As you enter more and more in the realm of God, as your life gets more and more illumined by the light of God, as your heart is filled more and more with divine love and joy, you contribute towards a swift evolution of mankind to the attainment of a beneficent, united and elevating world-order and fellowship. The warring tendencies in man are thus subdued and the inherent virtues of love and kindliness now revealing in human nature bring peace and goodwill on earth.

It is truly said by a Great One, "Individual peace paves the way to universal peace." Many of us wish that the world should become a place where all men may live with each other like the loving members of the same family in an atmosphere of tranquillity. Man is selfish and seeks earthly power and glory by throwing the lives of his fellowmen into pain and agony, because he has not found inner peace and happiness through communion with the infinite peace and joy — God.

The present world-turmoil is teaching a great lesson to mankind. It is man's failure to tune his life with God that has been responsible for this state. Man is solely occupied with the pleasures of the senses. Your task is, therefore, through direct communion with God, and the resultant experience of your spiritual unity and identity with Him, to transmit His radiance to others and awaken them to the awareness of a world-consolidating force — God.

When the sun shines, it simply sheds its radiance and the world is bright with its light. So also when the sun of Divinity shines within you, you manifest naturally His powers in all their beauty and benevolence.

Prayer is not begging for earthly things for your own personal and petty satisfaction. Meditation is not for gaining any selfish ends. The aim is to elevate your soul so that it may be purified and become conscious of its eternal oneness with the divine Spirit and Power. True friendship amongst human beings can be based only upon the realisation of this unity of all life. So, if we really aspire to see the world freed from the chaos produced by destructive conflicts and wars, let us give up the unnatural differences amongst us born of ignorance, and through the knowledge of the Spirit, bind ourselves together by ties of immortal Love and thereby bring about peace and goodwill in the world. May we become the torch-bearers of divine light, power and peace! May God's grace grant all the vision of Truth! May the blessings of the Almighty shower in abundance on mankind!

NEW WORLD-ORDER

We are living at a most critical period of world's history. Momentous changes can be envisaged in the affairs of mankind. The civilization which was held to be of a very high type and believed to be an ideal achievement for all time, is crumbling to pieces. There is now a necessary reshuffling of the values of life. The war that is now raging all around us is a war against materialism, against man's ambition for earthly dominion and glory. We can clearly see through it all

the omnipotent Divine Will working.

There are various speculations about the probable new order that will evolve out of the travail and suffering through which the world is passing. But the one real good which will come to humanity from the turmoil and devastation of the war is an universal awakening to the knowledge of the Spirit.

We know earthly power and possessions stand for strife and war. We also know how selfishness, pride and greed are the cause of widespread misery and suffering. These are the lessons which we have learnt from the present world-situation.

The horror and darkness of war must pass away and the dawn of a new order of life has to come in which mutual love and goodwill will prevail. Even the leaders who are responsible for the conduct of the war declare in no uncertain voice that their ultimate aim is to establish equality and harmony on the face of the earth. The same hope is cherished by saintly and peace-loving souls all over the world. In fact the entire humanity, both those who are taking active part in the various theatres of war and those who are watching this tremendous struggle, are one in their single aspiration for universal peace. Hence it naturally follows that a better order of things, wherein man will live with man in a spirit of friendliness and brotherhood, ought to be the outcome. God works in His own mysterious ways and wherever we turn, His hand is visible.

Now what is the path and attitude we have to adopt under the conditions? God acts through human beings to fulfil His divine purpose and plan — through such of them as have surrendered themselves to His

will and made themselves fit instruments. They are the chosen ones who will shed divine light, love and peace in an atmosphere clouded and ringing with dust and din of war. It is they who will sow the seed of lasting peace and goodwill. It is by them that the world will be redeemed and man will be inspired to walk on the path of righteousness. Every one of you who has understood the true aim of this life, and who has realised that to live for God and His service is the purpose of his advent in this world, can be the chosen one. Hence Ramdas exhorts you all to dedicate your being to God, who is the inner and outer controller of the worlds. May His light and power radiate through you! May you, through constant communion with Him, disseminate love and joy in the world! May you release an invincible mass of spiritual energy so that, by God's grace, you may hasten the era of the coming reconstruction of the world on a sure and lasting foundation of peace and happiness to people living in it!

Time is precious. Every minute is pregnant with immense possibilities. It is no good frittering away time and energy in ephemeral pursuits. This is the occasion for conservation of your spiritual strength by perfect self-control and discipline. God is a living Truth. This war is out to reveal and prove this fact even to the rank atheist who denies a world-unifying Force — God. From whatever aspect we consider about this war, we find that it has come as a blessing to mankind. Let us make the best of it by realising the immortality of our soul and standing up — free and fearless in the face of danger and death — offer our lives in the service of Him in the needy and distressed humanity.

THE NEW WORLD - I

The new world and the new order that is to come after this war, in which goodwill and harmony should prevail among the nations of the earth, can be based only upon a radical change in the inner consciousness of mankind. So long as the lower nature of man is dominant and so long as the divine nature in him is not developed, in order to realise the spiritual unity underlying the lives of all beings and creatures, there cannot be real peace and order in the world. So the primary duty of every human being, at this critical juncture in the history of humanity, is to recognise the supremacy of Spirit over matter and adjust the conduct of life in consonance with the awareness of the immortal link that binds all lives into one.

We already observe in the horizon the dawn of a world-consolidation. The terrible sufferings which the war has inflicted upon the world is awakening it to its inherent spiritual glory. Man has been living merely on the surface; so his life was beset with abject fear, false ambition and gross ignorance. His one pursuit was for material acquisitions and enjoyments. The Tamasic and Rajasic qualities held sway over his life. Invidious distinctions and differences had rent the social fabric into conflicting groups, communities and parties. In the world of people all are the children and expressions of one indwelling Divinity. It is evident, the purpose of this world-war is to do away with these unnatural differences and establish the sovereignty of the Spirit on our planet.

Saints, incarnations and prophets came from age to age in different climes to deliver the message of unity, harmony and peace for the regeneration of man-

kind. They have sown the precious seed of the tree of universal brotherhood. Now is the time this tree bears abundant fruit. A spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice is firing the hearts of all people inhabiting the earth. Where there is self, there is darkness, fear and ignorance. Where the self is absent, there is radiance, intrepidity and wisdom.

Suffering comes to man in various ways, but the present suffering, that has come in one common sweep to all people here, has a deep meaning and significance. It has come to purify, ennoble and awaken human life. Therefore it behoves every one of us to lay at the service of the poor, weak and distressed, all our energies and resources and convert our life into a fragrant flame to be waved at the feet of our Eternal Beloved. Death is a passing event in the manifestation of the Truth. Man is an immortal Spirit. Death is not for him. Let him dwell in this consciousness always. Panic, doubt and a feeling of helplessness do not become him.

In this world-play, there is one power at work, there is one consciousness that witnesses all its movements, one intelligence that guides and controls all affairs — in fact, one spiritual radiance which is flooding the entire earth. This power and radiance is God, and His will ever triumphs.

INVOKE DIVINE HARMONY

Owing to the war, the world is filled with discordant noises of bursting bombs, crashing of buildings and huge structures, din and rattle of marching tanks, shooting of machine guns and explosions of

shells and fury of the rushing armoured cars on the one hand and piteous wails of sufferers and death agonies of dying millions who come under the scourge of war on the other. All these are producing a chaotic medley of noises that are rending the air. Verily, humanity is passing through a terrible ordeal. Although the picture is lurid and fearsome, the heart of faith remains unshaken because it is still looking up to the Divine for the coming of a new age and order — out of the present turmoil and confusion — which will establish peace and goodwill on earth.

Hate is ruling the day — hate that destroys those who harbour it and equally those towards whom it is directed. Hate means discord, dissension and war. The impact of the war-atmosphere is telling even upon peace-loving people living in the nooks and corners of the world which are not directly affected by this cataclysm. The equanimity and balance of the life of humanity is so deeply disturbed that the war-mentality seems to encroach upon even the non-combatant members of the human race and draw them also into the conflagration.

India is a chosen country. India is a land of religion. The influence of India's sages and saints on her children is not lost. India shall rise as a spiritual luminary to dispel the chaotic and destructive forces now at work and reinstate a reign of concord, unity and peace among the nations of the earth.

India's way is clear. She should be awakened to the greatness and glory of God. She should reveal her spiritual strength and radiance. Her children should give up all internal differences and dissensions and join hands as children of one Divine Parent and by the power of their spiritual force, lead humanity to

the goal of world-union and freedom.

India's weapon should be universal love. Her ideal should be universal vision. Her worship should be universal service. Her watchword should be the Name of the universal God. The hope of humanity is in the hands of India.

India is already roused and alert. She is shaking off her lethargy. God's will and power are unerringly breaking through the age-long encrustations of unnatural sense of division and diversity. A life imbued with a new light, knowledge and power is dawning upon India. She has started in right earnest to counteract the highly turbulent forces that seek to hold complete sway upon the affairs of mankind, by spiritual forces that stand for harmony, equanimity and peace.

The Divine Name is pregnant with a power to transform the world by its magic. The Divine Name can bring light where there is darkness, love where there is hate, order where there is chaos, and happiness where there is misery. The Name can change the entire atmosphere of the world from one of strife and war to that of mutual love, goodwill and peace. The Name is God Himself.

So to hasten the day of mankind's liberation from the thralldom of ill-will, cruelty and hatred, the way is to assert the sovereignty of God over all things and keep the mind in tune with Him through the chanting of His holy Name. Let the nectar of His Name flow in streams of light and joy through the hearts and mouths of all Indians. Let the thought of God, like a cyclonic breeze, sweep throughout the length and breadth of this blessed land. Let His Name ring in the hearts of us all and produce a divine symphony,

a rapturous music, and an eternal song. Let India raise a fragrant oblation of a united, pure and selfless prayer to the Almighty for soon bringing in the age of calmness, serenity and peace in the world. All victory be to Him and His Name!

RELIGIOUS UNITY

There are many religions, many creeds and many sects in the world. The object of them all is, ostensibly, to awaken in the heart of man a consciousness of a spiritual kinship — a knowledge of the Brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood or Motherhood of God. But what is the actual situation? Instead of standing for unity, love and brotherhood, they are busy fomenting ill-will and dissension in the relations between man and man, and, curiously enough, this is all done in the name of God.

The great Teachers, who brought the light of God to the hearts of men, belonged to no religion, no society, no church and no temple. Their temple was the entire world and their God dwelt in the hearts of all beings and creatures. So their love poured out for all alike irrespective of any man-made creed or class. Their love was as free as the air and their vision was as universal as the sunlight and their service was alike to all members of the human race.

There is struggle, strife and war going on in the world for attaining earthly power and glory. Men who are pursuing these aims are naturally impelled by the lower nature or self. But what to say of those who create trouble, violence and misery in the name of God who is all love, mercy and peace?

. Then again, just as superiority complex is rampant among those who are proud of their race, wealth, status and caste, so also it is evident among the followers of the great Teachers of the world. They say: "My Teacher alone is perfect and you can attain salvation only if you follow him; my religion is the true religion and all other religions are false; I am the only civilized man and you are all heathens and infidels." So long as this kind of mentality persists with the so-called religionists, instead of bringing about unity, harmony and peace in the world, they spread in it only discord and chaos.

The very conception of God is founded upon the principle of universal harmony and peace. He is the true servant of God and humanity who understands this truth and, realizing the unifying power of divine love, looks upon all his fellow-men as members of one family of God. It is now that he beholds Divinity in all of them. It is now that his heart is flooded with pure love and his vision is radiant with light divine and his life is a consecrated offering to the indwelling God. A spiritual awakening of this nature is the need of the hour. Man should purify his heart and fill it with divine love and his life must flow in blissful spontaneity in the service of the suffering humanity.

Denominations, labels, organizations and societies are of secondary importance. The Divine Spirit — call Him God, Truth or Reality — should possess our souls so that we can melt into His being and become His very embodiments. Christ, Buddha, Krishna or Mohammed are not for being held merely as great ideals to be worshipped from afar. We have to mould and transform our lives so that we may become like them — rise to their stature and know our real divine and immortal

nature.

Inherently every soul is bathing in the light and joy of God. If we only attain to the awareness of this glory, we can bring peace and goodwill in the world, otherwise not. Mere preaching, without becoming a flaming example that touches, elevates and transmutes the hearts of men, can do little good.

Owing to wars the world is passing through a period of terrible agony. It behoves us all now to sink our petty differences and unitedly lift our hearts to the Divine Master of the worlds in a prayer for peace and goodwill on earth. It is not given to us to fully understand God and His ways. Let us not quarrel over the limited and imperfect conceptions we form of Him. We know that God is omnipotent, all-loving and all-merciful. Let us open our hearts so that His power and grace may be revealed in us. Let us submit our will to His will so that He may work through us. Let our puny self disappear in the effulgence of His presence. Let us love all people in the world in His name. Let our hearts go out in compassion and sympathy towards all those who are in sorrow and suffering. Let us invoke His blessings upon them. May we become His true children inheriting the qualities of our divine parentage!

WAY TO WORLD-HARMONY

The recent great war which caused tremendous destruction on earth has ended, but the world-condition has not changed for the better. Everywhere we find unrest, strife and dissension. In all fields and situations of life, there is clamour for power and wealth. Acute differences about religious beliefs have also been respon-

sible for discord and trouble. At this critical juncture of world-history there is only one way, one hope, one remedy by which humanity can be saved from another catastrophe.

The words of the great sages and teachers of the world must be heard. God has spoken and is speaking through them. All religions, therefore, proclaim the same message, namely, the message of mutual love and affection. Mankind has to recognise the supremacy of the Divine over the lower human nature — find a spiritual basis, the discovery of which alone can unite man with man and produce harmony and peace in the world. True religion stands for unity and peace.

The essentials of all religions and teachings of saints and sages are same. It is adherence to non-essentials, to which man ignorantly clings, that has been breeding quarrels. God is one. He is the divine parent of all peoples of the world. He is the God of all faiths and religions. In whatever form or manner He is worshipped, He accepts such allegiance and adoration. When all the members of the human race turn to Him as the common Originator and Protector, they can stand united in His name and thereby shed all differences that make for discord and war. It is now alone that mutual love and respect would prevail among peoples inhabiting different countries of the world.

O beloved, turn Godward and realise supreme unity and harmony of all life. Give up lust for material things by striving for which you trample upon the rights of your fellow-men and exploit them, spreading thereby pain, misery and death. The true way to peace and blessedness is the way of love. Love is Divine. It is the attribute of the supreme Lord of the universe. In fact,

love itself is He. Bear Him in your bosom. Let His radiance dispel the darkness which clouds the soul. Walk in the light of God. Be guided by His counsel and inspiration. Look to Him for real freedom and joy.

World-renowned empires and kingdoms have perished. Potentates, kings and prominent leaders have left the earth leaving no trace behind. The realisation of their ambitions has done neither good to themselves nor to humanity at large. On the other hand, every fulfilment of their selfish aims has embittered their lives and of those who follow them, as also of those who opposed them. So O beloved, get thoroughly awakened to the inner life which is the real life. By seeking and attaining contact with God, sanctify your life and be an illumined instrument for bringing about peace and goodwill on earth. Each one of you is a potential spiritual dynamo. Release the inherent divine force dwelling within you. Give up all superstitions, false doctrines and other dogmas that create the sense of division and separation. Break down every kind of barrier that stands between you and your brethren. Realise that humanity as a whole is one world-family. Let your vision be universal. Let your life flow along the channel of universal beneficence. Let your love embrace all beings as members of one universal brotherhood. Do not be influenced by man-made distinctions of class, creed, colour, race and nationality. Merge all these in the one all-inclusive and all-enveloping consciousness of the Godhead. This is the path and the only path that would steer the struggling humanity clear of the present state of chaos, and guide it to the haven of lasting harmony, happiness and peace.

THE NEW WORLD - II

The world is at present passing through a critical period of transition. Everywhere, leaders of people who stand for isolation, selfish aggrandisement and territorial expansion are confronted with the dominating spirit of a world-union based on equality, goodwill and harmony. The lower ideals which they represent, born of racial, communal and national distinctions, have proved to be of no value or significance before the dawn of greater and truer consciousness. This consciousness, being universal in its nature, lifts the heart of humanity above all man-made sense of division and separateness which is the cause of repeated conflict, strife and war.

Here and there the glimpse of this new vision is revealed and the crust of ignorance is breaking up, so that a flood of divine light may illumine the hearts of all human beings and bring them together into one consolidated world-family or brotherhood.

We perceive, hitherto, humanity has been guided by false leaders and prophets who have been leading it into wilderness and chaos with the result that destruction, bloodshed and consequent pain and misery have been its lot. The peoples are fed up with their methods of hate, revenge and death. We have before us a world tired of these things, struggling to reach a new haven wherein it can live in peace and harmony.

In response to this call, we behold saints and sages and great men of international outlook in India and other parts of the world, whose hearts are aching for the suffering humanity, are active on both the physical and spiritual planes for creating an atmosphere and mentality freed from the domination of the lower impulses of the human nature that spell disaster and chaos.

So, at this juncture, the message of the Spirit should go forth for healing the lacerated hearts of the people and awaken them to a consciousness of the coming world of unity and peace. The soul's union with God and universe is the way of approach to this eagerly desired goal.

The values of life should no longer be set merely on the material aspect of it. The Divine that pervades all existence, and who is the soul and life of all beings, should be made manifest for bringing about world-peace and harmony. On no other achievement can the redemption of the world be possible.

It is only when the heart shines with the splendour of God that hate, wrath and greed can leave it and man can live in peace with man, and mutual love and affection can prevail. So, the more the minds of people are turned towards God, the more they will become pure and peaceful and the better will be the world to live in. Just as the spark destroys in an instant a heap of cotton, so God-thought destroys all the evils rampant in the human breast. God is the only hope, for He is the only saviour. Let the hearts of us all be raised to bring down His grace so that His will may work through us for the fulfilment of His great purpose — universal harmony and peace. All glory be to Him and His Name!

MAKE A HEAVEN OF EARTH

We are living at present in momentous times. Humanity is on the verge of a great and far-reaching change. The old values and vision of life that stood for division and isolation are being replaced by the dawn

of a new spirit and consciousness which symbolise unity and brotherhood. The differences based on racial, national and creedal considerations are fast disappearing, giving place to a feeling of mutual fellowship and solidarity.

Although a threat of another world-conflict seems to be in the air, we can clearly feel or be aware that the coming of a state of world-harmony and peace is very near.

The circumstances, which are taken to be inimical to the birth of such an all round awakening to this new life and consciousness, provide in fact the necessary condition for the consummation of this supreme ideal. It is in India that this great experiment will first be made. The old order is passing through the transforming crucible of the Divine Alchemist causing dissolution of all things that make for invidious distinctions and differences based on caste, creed and nationality. There is, so to say, an urge for the closing up of the ranks.

The real cause of the above transformation in the life of India and the world is the quickening of the spirit in man. It has been discovered that the true foundation of life should be built on the knowledge of the eternal life principle — call it by the name God or Truth. It is both the outer necessity and inner spiritual need that can break down all barriers between man and man and create a new world of mutual goodwill, harmony and peace.

Really we are living at a most important juncture of world-history when each one of us can contribute potentially towards the formation of a world-federation. It is not by a collective effort that we progress towards this realisation so much as by the striving of every indivi-

dual to raise himself and tune his mind and heart with the universal principle on which all external forms of life hang on like so many beads strung on the thread of a rosary. So the Truth, the Divine Principle or God is the underlying Reality by the awareness of which or whom alone can we achieve and retain the supreme unity to which humanity is led willy-nilly by the invisible hand of Providence.

Let us all wish and pray with all our heart that this process of transformation may proceed with acceleration so that the world may soon become a heavenly place for all human beings to live in peace and happiness.

UNITY

The secret of peace for the individual and humanity is to make life simple, freed from the strain of selfish desires and ambitions. The moment life is relieved of its burdens which we have imposed on it, it is enabled to mingle freely with all other lives in the world and thus create a consciousness of harmony and unity. As it is, the world is seized with the lust of power and domination, converting life into an intricate and complex tangle, which does not admit of mutual goodwill and peace among the members of the human race inhabiting it.

If we stretch our vision as far back to the past as we can, and have a peep into the history of the world, we find that innumerable attempts have been made to formulate and work out methods and systems for bringing about a state of orderliness in human affairs, which would contribute to the happiness of mankind. But they have all failed in gaining the desired result or

objective. Although some divinely-inspired leaders have striven to infuse, into the life of the people, spiritual light and meaning, they have not been able to fully transform it in accordance with their aim. This must be due to a lack of response or preparedness on the part of the people.

We have now reached a stage in human evolution when the world-affairs should be controlled, adjusted and administered on principles based on the inner unity of human life. All kinds of inequality must go. Every individual should live and move in an atmosphere of full freedom for his growth and progress to perfection. Such an equality can be established only when the spiritual unity of all human beings is realised. It is not a kinship based on external relationships or considerations, but a kinship born of the consciousness of the oneness of the Spirit that pervades all lives in the world.

In the eyes of God we are all equal, and as such we have to behave and live with each other. Indigence, want, starvation and disease must disappear. So also must disappear competition, extortion and exploitation. But this can happen only if we remember, every moment of our life, that all those with whom we come into contact — close or distant — are children of the same Parent.

HEAVEN UPON EARTH

There is one way to achieve world-peace. This is by every one getting awakened to the inner divine consciousness. The love between one soul and another should be based upon the realisation of this indwelling Reality. It is then alone that the spirit of universal

brotherhood can prevail among the different peoples and nations of the world. No other efforts, however great and noble, can create an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill, can mend world affairs and prevent strife, dissensions and war. When the divine spark hidden in the hearts of all beings blazes up and produces an all-round illumination, then alone will all the invidious distinctions dissolve. Man will live with man in fraternal love and affection. The present highly disturbed state of things in the world is there, because God has been ruled out, and mankind is in the clutches of the lower forces of its nature.

People talk of world-peace and harmony. They discuss about various plans, schemes and programmes for ushering in a better and happier world, all founded on adjustments on the material plane. Mere intellect, however developed or cultured, cannot determine the way and means for attaining this supreme aim. It is only the omnipotent power of God residing in every one of us that can do what is needed. So it is the bounden duty of every human being, at the present critical stage in the world's history, to invoke the all-conquering, divine power to come to the rescue.

Prayer has been preached as a great dynamic force for good, by all the saints and sages of the world, both modern and ancient. It is through prayer that the heart is tuned with God, and all its impurities are washed away. God-thought or God-remembrance is the sure way to free the mind from its greeds and lusts and passions. So long as man is in the grip of his lower, violent and selfish nature, he will make this fair earth an arena for acts of wanton tyranny and ruthless destruction.

When the heart becomes pure, and the mind shines with divine light, then opens, in us, a spring of universal love, in which all sense of difference, separation and diversity disappears, and we are gifted with the vision of looking upon human beings as members of one united world-family. Thereafter we utilise every ounce of our physical, mental and spiritual power for both the material and spiritual welfare of humanity as a whole.

Self-centredness, that is, too much concentration upon one's own selfish aims and objects, is responsible for the chaotic condition that now prevails in the affairs of the world. When our hearts and minds, through constant prayer and remembrance of the Divine, are purged of these unnatural and suicidal tendencies, true happiness and peace after which every man and woman on this earth is hankering, and for which they are all striving day and night, will be realised by us.

Now, we know the remedy for removing the present discontent, agitation and disorder. Let every one of us devote more and more time to the contemplation and remembrance of God — for which the easiest method is to mentally repeat, or with the tongue chant, God's glorious name — and truly establish the much talked of and universally longed for Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

TRANSMIT THE MESSAGE OF PEACE

The potency of the united thoughts of millions is simply miraculous. The mind illumined with the ideal of the highest Spirit can work wonders. Even the thought — good or evil — of a single person, has a far-reaching effect. How much more powerful and irresistible must be the combined thought of all those in the

world who take a resolute stand against all that makes for discord and disruption in it.

The first step in this direction is to awaken the mind of humanity. All people of different view-points have to be brought round to think that war is inimical to the evolution of man, to the acquisition of real and enduring peace and happiness, both for the individual and for the masses. War in any part of the world reacts on all countries alike, bringing untold misery to every member of the human race, just as in the case of the human body, where the whole body suffers if any part of it is affected by pain or disease. The local disease or pain spreads all over the system, producing all-round misery. This is what has to be impressed on the minds of all, before they can be made to take an abiding interest in this vital problem of the day. This kind of preparatory work has got to be done by the friends of the cause in different parts of the world.

We know that a thought of peace and goodwill has got immense power to conquer and transmute a thought of an opposite kind. Since the thought of peace and goodwill is born of the Universal Spirit — on whom the external life of humanity is based — when hundreds and millions unite together in this one thought, there will be released an invincible power which would not only neutralise the war-mentality that seeks to rule the world, but also create a widespread and all-embracing consciousness of peace. So, what we need is to transmit the message of peace from heart to heart, and produce against war and chaos a consensus of thought, backed up by the power of the Spirit.

ROAD TO HAPPINESS AND HARMONY

The question is often asked: 'When people in the world are suffering in various ways, when they have not enough food or clothing and when they have to struggle even for their very existence, how can they aspire for the realisation of God? What Sadhana can they do?' Ramdas shall try to answer this question.

It is true that in this world there is great suffering of various kinds. Much of it is man-made. Let us see how it is caused. What is happening now? People seem to have forgotten God. They have become dishonest and greedy. They want somehow to hoard money and materials. Some have accumulated vast wealth, lands and food-stuffs, whereas many have not got enough to live even for a day. This is due to unequal distribution of wealth.

How can there be equal distribution? It can come only when people become broad-minded and sympathetic, and feel happy in helping others. Those who have genuine devotion to God are kind and compassionate. They will surely share whatever they have with those who are badly in want. If every owner of material wealth does this, realising his responsibility, the problem is solved and there will be no starvation or want anywhere in the world.

There is another aspect of the problem, another angle from which to approach this question. Even in this world of suffering, want and misery, we find that those who are truly devoted to God do not suffer. God Himself takes up their lives' burdens and looks after their welfare. '*Ananyaschintayantomam ye janah par-yupasate tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vaha-myaham*' says the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita. Many

are the stories told to show how the Lord unfailingly comes to the rescue of His devotees who depend solely on Him with *Ananya-bhakti*, or single-hearted devotion. Everybody knows from experience also that this is true. One who entirely depends upon God never suffers for want of the absolute necessities of life.

We hear that in many places, now-a-days, there is no rain. There is no water, and crops fail, causing famine and distress. What is the reason for this? People think that they are clever enough to carry on in the world without God's aid, and they become greedy. For them God is out of the picture. God is within us and if we think of Him and pray to Him, He will grant us everything we need. But the necessary condition is that our mind must be turned towards Him instead of being absorbed in worldly objects. Sufferings in the world will disappear if people would only remember God and depend on Him. Forgetfulness of God is the root cause of misery in the world. Saints rightly hold that those who think of God alone are happy, and those who forget Him are unhappy.

To revert to the first view-point. To bring about equal distribution of wealth in the world, those who have plenty must give away freely to those who are in want, so that whatever is available is shared by all alike. But this attitude towards life can come only to those who are devotees of God. One should not think of having more than what one actually needs. We should never be greedy, but find joy in giving what we have to others.

We can have real happiness and joy only if we think of God who is within us. There is a panacea for all the ills of life. That is Ram Smaran, or remem-

brance of God. Many have tried and are still trying to bring about harmony and peace in the world by various other methods. But the world continues to be as it was. What is the reason? Nothing can be achieved by merely superficial means. We must go within ourselves and realise that behind all these names and forms pervades the one Eternal Spirit. This will lead us to the realisation of unity in diversity. Then we cease to see others as separate from us. Love will then spontaneously flow from us to others. This divine vision is the basis of all mutual help and harmony. This alone can bring about real peace and happiness in the world.

One who has everything in the world, but has forgotten God, is bound to be unhappy. All the riches in the world cannot give him true peace and joy. Ramdas met rich people, millionaires, Rajas and Maharajas, rolling in wealth, when he was wandering about as a Fakir. Though clad in beggar's garb, he was quite blissful. The big people were charmed by his happy and care-free state. They used to invite Ramdas to their homes to spend some time in his company. Ramdas then asked them, 'You have got so much wealth. Are you not happy?' They frankly admitted they were not. That shows that happiness does not depend on mere worldly possessions. Wealthy people envied Ramdas who, though a Fakir, was immersed in Bliss. Real happiness is only for those who always think, live, move and have their being in God.

Mere accumulation of wealth and worldly possessions does not lead to happiness. Those who give whatever they have to those who are in want and distress, find real happiness by so doing. Others get attached to

wealth and possessions. By forgetting God and clinging to their possessions, they become unhappy themselves and make others also unhappy. But those who live in God are themselves happy and make others also happy. How wonderfully fine the world will be if more and more people live such a life, devoted to God and ready to remove the sufferings of fellow-beings! Then alone will humanity live in harmony, peace and plenty.

A MISSION OF DIVINE LOVE

It is the will of God, Ramdas' Divine Master, that His servant should leave India on a tour abroad visiting various countries of the West and the East. He starts with the most gracious blessings of many contemporary saints of India, received in response to his prayer. They have in their inspiring words given him encouragement for the fulfilment of his mission which is to propagate the ideal of Universal Love and Service.

The success or failure of the mission is not Ramdas' concern. God fulfils Himself in inscrutable ways. Ramdas goes forth with confidence amongst the peoples, far and near, as a simple child of all saints and as a dedicated servant of his Divine Master, relying solely on the strength of His guidance and protection for the discharge of the task entrusted to him.

From the merely human standpoint, the world at present appears to be heading to a major catastrophe. There is, however, no reason to be alarmed. We are subject to fear and pessimism only when we take a superficial view of the world-problems, ignoring the fact that an invisible and almighty Controller governs the destinies of mankind from within and without, shaping

all events and movements according to His will and plan.

The most crying need of the hour is a dynamic faith in the eternal verities of life. It is only on the basis of the realisation of the all-pervading Supreme Spirit that we can conquer fear and establish true peace and harmony on this earth. We must sink all man-made distinctions and stand up as the children of one Divine Parent. It is only on a plane that transcends all political and ideological controversies that we can resolve our differences and live and move with one another in a spirit of universal brotherhood. Love alone can conquer hate. True love is born of the realisation of the indwelling Divinity in every one of us. Love should exert a dominating influence in our lives whether it be in the individual, communal, national or international sphere. The Divine should enliven and awaken us to the awareness of our spiritual kinship and the unity of mankind as a whole.

True knowledge and selfless love should guide our deliberations and actions in all fields of life. Love should be our pole-star and service should be the light that radiates from it for the welfare of all human beings. Then alone we can eradicate the evils that spell discord, war and disaster. Lack of understanding and love is the cause of mutual fear, distrust and dissension. Spiritual awakening from within is essential for bringing about a state of real peace and goodwill in the world.

Ramdas feels that the only way to spread the message of love is for him to bathe those, with whom he comes in contact, in the streams of love that spontaneously flow from his heart. With the spiritual experience that his Divine Master has granted him, he is moving

among all beings looking upon them as the very embodiments of the Divine. Ramdas' heart is with all great faiths and religions, as they have been founded by Prophets and Incarnations, and as from all of them he has derived divine light and inspiration. Ramdas is one with all peace-lovers who strive in whatever way to dissolve differences that make for discord and strife, in order to bring about unity and friendliness among the peoples of the world.

May God's will fulfil itself through the great souls who are trying in different parts of the world to stem the tide of a devastating war! May they, by their penance and sacrifice, release the divine power for bringing a reign of peace and goodwill on earth! By the Supreme Master's grace, may the attempts of all these illumined souls, from whose hearts ever rise waves of compassion for suffering humanity, be completely crowned with success!

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After the announcement of the proposed tour, Ramdas has been receiving almost everyday letters from friends in Africa, Europe, England and the U.S.A., in which, with overflowing love and affection, they accord Ramdas, Mother Krishnabai and the party, hearty welcome to their respective countries. We are deeply grateful to them for this. There is a famous couplet by an Indian saint, which says, "When God becomes your friend, the whole world is kind and gracious to you." How true!

TRUE INDEPENDENCE

Real independence is spiritual. It is the inner freedom from fear and sorrow. This is attainable only by knowledge of the Eternal, by realisation of the universal, divine Spirit. Ignorance is the cause of all bondage. Man's forgetfulness of his true divine nature is the cause of ignorance and sorrow. Ignorance makes him identify himself wrongly with his body and crave for the ephemeral things of the world. Knowledge alone can make him free and happy.

There is no greater victory than the victory of the Spirit. The real hero is he who has mastered the mind. Conquest of the mind is possible only by awareness of the great Truth, the immortal, divine Spirit that pervades all existence. That is the master-key to get lasting success and happiness. All troubles in the world have their roots in mental chaos resulting from ignorance of the real nature and purpose of life.

Mankind today is in the clutches of false aims and aspirations which deny spiritual values. It holds that material advancement, achieved by any means, can lead to happiness and human welfare. There can be no end of troubles for man so long as he clings to such mistaken ideas and fails to attune his life to the life Divine. Realisation of equality, founded on the spiritual kinship of all beings, must form the real basis for all human relationships among individuals and nations. Selfishness and greed must be rooted out and the heart purged of base ambitions for material wealth, power and fame at the expense of others. Till then there can be no peace and happiness for man.

We shall be celebrating our triumphs the wrong way if we fail to search our hearts on such occasions for

the purpose of self-purification and do not remind ourselves of life's supreme goal, which is the realisation of Self or God. We should embrace the ideal of universality and cease to think in terms of separation or isolation of individuals, communities, castes, creeds and nations. We should stop exploiting our fellow-beings in any manner and learn to live in tune with the Divine.

AIM AT SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Independence is of two kinds; one is physical and the other spiritual. By being free only physically, it does not mean that one has achieved real freedom. The body may be free, but the soul is still bound. Such a person is as good as the one who is in bondage.

True freedom is of the Spirit, for freedom cannot mean happiness. We see so many who are physically free and yet are unhappy. We have heard and seen many others who are physically bound, but are really happy at heart. Happiness is a state of our inner being, which is independent of all external conditions.

The aim of all life is to achieve lasting happiness. This cannot be attained, as we all know, by any other means than liberating the mind from the clutches of desires and realising the supreme truth of our existence — God.

God is rightly defined as Sat-chit-anand. Sat is pure existence, Chit is illumined consciousness and power, and Anand is unending bliss and peace. This exalted spiritual experience is based on the absolute freedom of the soul from the lure of sense desires, which are the cause of a person's restless, discontented and imprisoned life.

When the soul is free and attuned to the Divine, it achieves true Samrajya. In this state its narrow vision, which is based on identity merely with the flesh, is transformed into a universal vision embracing all beings and creatures as the expressions of the immortal, free and blissful Truth-consciousness.

This is the independence which our sages and saints realised and preached from age to age. Human relationships founded upon this realisation alone bring communities and nations together in a spirit of mutual love and goodwill and thereby establish true harmony and peace on this earth. So let us aim at this independence.

WAY TO WORLD-BROTHERHOOD

Essentially, humanity is one. Under the influence of nescience we create a sense of diversity and see distinctions and differences among the members of the human race. We possess a natural affinity to each other. Every one of us possesses the same power of thought, feeling and action. We are blessed with speech, which is a splendid means by which we can communicate with each other. So we should think, feel and act in a spirit of love and unity.

The life-principle that activates all beings is the same. We all breathe the same air, walk on the same earth, and are equally entitled to the enjoyment of the amenities which nature provides. The earth yields its rich gifts to all alike. The differences between man and man on the material plane are, in truth, unnatural and improper. For, the component parts and composition of human bodies and the qualities inherent in them are not diverse and conflicting. If we look with the pure

vision that belongs to an enlightened mind, we do not see any clear-cut line of demarcation that isolates man from man, one set of people from another, or one nation from another. We are indeed parts of a stupendous whole. We are units that form the world-community or family. So we can live and act as members of a world-brotherhood or federation.

This is proved to be true so far as the physiological and material side of life is concerned. Now let us go deeper through matter into Spirit. At the basis of this vast material manifestation there is one supreme all-pervading Reality. When this Reality is known, we rise above the body-consciousness and realise the unity of all existence in the realm of the Spirit. Really the same Truth dwells in all, the Truth that permeates all lives, not merely human, but also the animal and vegetable life. Nay, the Truth pervades the entire universe, both animate and inanimate. For him who has transcended the relative planes of life, all invidious distinctions disappear like mist in the sun. His heart blossoms into love for the entire creation. There is the Vedantic saying, "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma" — verily, everything here is Brahman or Truth. For him, then, all beings, creatures and things are the revelations of the immanent and transcendent Spirit.

Now we know for certain that both materially and spiritually all beings on the globe are fundamentally one. Let us, through the use of our reason and, going still deeper, through a soul-realisation, discover the fact that we are co-related to each other in blood, flesh and spirit, and belong to the one united world-manifestation of the Spirit.

Thus world-brotherhood, in which there is no differ-

ence of race, country, nationality, creed and colour, becomes a reality. It is not a state to be newly achieved, but a truth to be realised and experienced. The awakening within us should enable us to shake off the illusion that possesses us, distorting our vision and creating unnatural clashes, discords and wars.

The only way to solve the world-problem is to break down this subversive mentality by plunging within ourselves, through self-control and purification, and find the supreme and all-pervading Spirit of our real being. In the great Scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna says, "I am the Sutratman — the immanent Spirit that, like the thread in a rosary, links everything together. I pervade all beings and things as the Atman or Spirit, just as a string passes through the beads in a rosary." All beings are, therefore, strung as it were on the same Truth or Spirit that pervades everywhere. So, looking at humanity from the vision of this in-dwelling Spirit, we are all one. The thread is gold, the beads are also gold. So also the formless, unmanifest, omnipresent Divine is one, and the forms, lives and things which are expressions of this eternal Reality are also one. World-brotherhood, international federation, unity of mankind, which all mean one and the same, have to be realised by every one of us. Then only we can truly love and help each other without any hatred or ill-will in our attitude, without any taint of self-seeking in our conduct towards our fellow-beings. In this lies our salvation, the way to peace and harmony, the supreme destiny and happiness of the human race.

THE QUEST FOR WORLD-PEACE

People are busy finding out ways and means to bring about peace in the world. So many conferences are being held and pacts are entered into; still the situation remains more or less the same. Then, where is the way out of the difficulty that confronts us? Everybody seeks to solve the problem, but there is no solution found. We are in despair and are getting nervous. Intense fear has seized us. That does not help matters. We do not know what to do in order to bring peace and goodwill in the world.

The fights, wars and discords in the world have no high purpose, aiming as they do only at ephemeral power, wealth and glory. The material achievements appear and disappear like bubbles on the surface of the ocean. We strive to catch them and for a moment they seem to be in our grasp; but the next minute they vanish and turn to nothing.

Peace is our quest. It is the hunger of our soul. But that peace can be had only by uniting ourselves with the supreme Truth pervading everywhere. We are fighting to put down others and think that by doing so we will be happy and peaceful. History also goes to show that, from time immemorial, fights and wars have been waged for world-domination, with the ostensible object of establishing peace and harmony in the world.

It is, indeed, an irony that people should fight in the name of peace. Real peace can be got only by going within ourselves and by finding the great Reality, God. The quest must be turned inward. But what the politicians are now doing is, they are trying to patch up differences on the surface. They cannot achieve lasting success by such methods, and naturally there will be

clashes again and again. All of them talk of peace and at the same time prepare for war. If we find the Truth within us, we know that all this talk of peace and harmony in the world, by adjustment of differences on the surface through conferences and pacts, goes only to show the depth of our ignorance. We are coining new formulae to convince each other, but without true conviction. The result is failure and confusion all round, bringing misery to the world.

There is only one way out of the impasse. That is for every individual to realise the great Truth that underlies the entire universe and thereby establish true harmony and goodwill on this distracted earth. Peace is within us. It is in the Self, the Atman, which, as the Upanishads declare, is *Shanti Samriddham Amritam* — is full of Peace and is immortal.

So we should set about realising the Divine within our hearts and spread the glory of God everywhere and shed on all the people who come in contact with us the light which we have gained for ourselves. We can thereby create a truly peaceful atmosphere in and around us which will scatter the war-clouds that hang over us. As a preparation for this great task, we must rid our hearts of all hatred so that God's light may shine in them and waves of divine love may rise and spread over the world. This love will enable the current of peace to pass from heart to heart and spread a peace-atmosphere all over the globe and make wars and strifes impossible.

Some may contend that the war-mentality is created by a few politicians or by a small set of people — the imperialists or militarists — and that the general population are not really in favour of war and are not responsible for it. But this is not true. Each one of us is

responsible for the war-mentality. So long as there is hate and wrath in our hearts, we directly or indirectly help to produce this war-mentality. We are also responsible for electing, as our representatives in our respective parliaments, those who believe in war and who are ready to support their leaders when they enter into war.

If we keep our mind calm and peaceful in the contemplation of God within us and learn to love one another, these very persons who now want to wage war will disarm themselves and the war idea will entirely disappear from the mind of man. So we must individually and jointly try to produce a peace atmosphere. Each individual must do what lies in his power to create the atmosphere for peace and harmony in the world, because individuals make up humanity. So the responsibility lies on the shoulders of everyone of us both for war and peace. We cannot blame anybody else. We find now there is a cold war going on in the world — a war of nerves. Even the peace-loving peoples are getting affected by this. So we as individuals must first create an atmosphere, and then a collective effort also should be made for putting down this war-mentality and spreading love and goodwill on earth.

There is another weakness in us which breeds the war-mentality. It is the fear complex. We have become prey to fear. Death holds terrors for us. This is because we think we are merely physical bodies subject to birth, growth, decay and death. To shed this fear we must realise that we are immortal and that even if the body perishes we are not going to perish. Only when fear leaves our hearts we shall remain in peace. Otherwise we shall distrust others and hate them. Fear causes agitation in our minds and we become restless.

We invite mishaps, calamities and catastrophies, all from fear: Our body-consciousness has become so firm through fear that to take the mind off the body and fix it on the Divine within us is very difficult. We must give up fear, knowing full well that by the death of the body we do not die.

Therefore, let us realise that death is to the body and not to the Spirit within us. A man who has really attuned himself with God is not at all afraid of death. So it is incumbent on every one of us to be free from the fear of death. This fear contributes a good lot to the present agitated condition of the world. It adds fuel to the fire, as it were, because fear and hate go together. Where there is hate there is fear, and where there is fear there is hate. Both are born of the sense of diversity and separateness.

If we talk about love, we must first practise it ourselves. If God has given us the power to love others as we love ourselves, then we should bring out that power. Unless we see the Divine everywhere and can look upon all as our own Self, we have no right to speak about love. Our love must be such as to transform those who come into contact with us. Preaching is not always necessary, nor successful. There is a better and surer way by which we can commune with and seek relationship with another. It is by recognising the kinship of the Spirit. If we transmit this universal love from person to person, country to country, and nation to nation, then we shall be able to create what is called world-brotherhood. This is essential to stem the tide of war that threatens to overwhelm us.

So individuals should first try to find peace within themselves. Then all such individuals in all parts of

The world should jointly try to bring peace by spreading the message of peace. Though the entire humanity may not join, let a small percentage of it at least take part in this. It will gradually transform others who are not at present in favour of the movement. Man's nature is developed according to the influence of the company he keeps. If we are true to God within us, and love our fellow-beings equally, by our contact they will also be inspired to do likewise. In this way we shall be able to start a current of universal love and peace, which will steadily neutralise the antagonistic forces of discord, strife and war.

Those engaged in the movement must, above all, remember that peace cannot be established unless humanity is freed from the clutches of pride, greed and hate that make for international warfare, both economic and political. Mere negative methods of combating the spectre of international wars and strifes should give place to positive methods of work. There is need for mobilising along constructive channels all the available spiritual forces derived from outstanding men of high spiritual attainments, and creating thereby a widespread atmosphere of harmony and goodwill in which wars would be rendered impossible.

India's greatness lies in her unique contribution to the world of the things of the Spirit for the regeneration of mankind. Even in her present impoverished state she has not neglected to realise the splendour of the Soul. That is her spiritual heritage handed down to us by the ancient saints and sages. She has stood always more for the riches of the Spirit than for the mere material power and wealth. The need of the present age is coordination of work on the material and spiritual

planes, so as to produce an all-round divine revelation. Purely political ideals, not based on the firm foundation of the Spirit, are of no value in solving the problems of life.

GENERAL CHRISTMAS

Twentyfour days more and we will have approached the blessed day of Christ's nativity, coming to us for the 1937th time. Christ is an incarnation of Love — God. His universal message is: "Peace and goodwill to all men on earth." It is known to Christians scattered all over the world that this great day should not only be celebrated by rejoicing and festivities but also as an occasion for realizing the everlasting unity and fellowship of the entire human race — that it should mark a distinct elevation of every Christian from his lower human nature of lust, greed and wrath to his higher divine nature of mutual love, kindness and forgiveness.

This is verily a day when we should forget all wrongs of the past and look upon our fellowmen in a spirit of perfect friendship and thereby grow into the likeness of Christ himself. Year after year, this sublime feeling is raised in the human breast, but it becomes only a passing emotion, giving place again to the degrading impulses of hate and animosity that make for discord and war.

No doubt, men reveal their inherent divine qualities when they are fired by great spiritual ideals embodied in personalities like Christ; but a permanent conversion of men on a mass scale is lamentably lacking. Else, the most cruel wars which are being waged in

Christian lands would have been impossible. Why is it that the enlightening and soothing influence of Christ cannot entirely transform the war-minded into men of peace? Because greed for material power and dominion has so deeply seized their hearts that they are impervious to the softening messages of such great souls.

War is a fever in the delirium of which people, like demented creatures, engage themselves in mutual slaughter; and they behave worse than wild beasts of the jungle.

Then again, we observe with pain the followers of another great Avatar — Buddha, who taught non-violence as the highest principle of life, engaged in a deadly conflict. Thousands of precious human lives are ruthlessly destroyed every day. Insensate ambition for territorial acquisition and inhuman delight in oppressing weaker people are the causes underlying this war as well.

Thus the world is agitated with wild and chaotic tempers and upheavals. What does it all portend? Is the phenomenal nature heading towards universal dissolution? — is the question asked. If we look behind the veil at the supreme Spirit controlling all things, we have no reason to despair and turn pessimistic. The present world-condition is a much needed travail for the birth of a new consciousness in humanity which will unite man to man, community to community and nation to nation into one consolidated world-fellowship. The voice of Christ and Buddha shall still penetrate the hearts of bellicose nations and, freeing them from their subversive cravings and desires, awaken in them the Almighty Spirit who stands for harmony, goodwill and peace in the world.

Oh, Christ and Buddha, guardian angels of the world, dearest Deities of our heart, pour on our distracted earth your invincible power of grace so that the storms that are raging on it be calmed down, and love and tranquillity may always prevail! May such a day arrive soon! Let this prayer go up like an incense from the heart of every human being, so that it might become a tremendous combined aspiration of irresistible spiritual strength, which would subdue and vanquish the destructive forces that are being let loose to create bloodshed and confusion on the earth. Victory be to God of love, wisdom and power!

So let Christmas be the real harbinger of peace and goodwill — a day not merely of jubilation but also of thorough heart-searching and purification, so that every one of us may contribute his or her share of concentrated peace-thought for the spiritual regeneration of humanity and for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

WHAT CHRIST TEACHES

Christ is the very incarnation of infinite Love and Peace. From year to year at the time of Christmas, the day of Christ's advent into the world, we remember the supreme message he came to deliver to the world. He taught that all human beings should live with each other in a spirit of mutual love and service, and that war of any kind is wrong. He taught that the Kingdom of Heaven or the state of eternal happiness can be achieved by uniting our life with the life Eternal, by recognising the sovereignty of God who resides in the hearts of all human beings. Forgiveness, compassion and

service are the keynotes of His teachings, for He knew that by developing these virtues alone humanity can attain real harmony and peace.

Christ held that it is folly to pursue false ambitions and aim at vanishing power, glory or riches. The magic word — Love — comprises all that Christ had to say. Europe, which has been celebrating Christ's birth every year with apparent zeal and devotion and was considering herself Christian in her belief and outlook, has now become a vast battlefield where mutual slaughter is going on incited by the ambition for earthly domination. We also witness another picture in Asia, as lamentable as the one in the West. Those who profess Buddha as their Spiritual Master are also engaged in destroying each other forgetting his dictum that harmlessness is the supreme duty of man.

However, it is the divine Law that in the evolution of humanity, the present time of stress, strife and war is a necessary prelude to the ensuing period of peace and goodwill on earth. There is nothing so purifying and enlightening as suffering. It is obvious that God has brought about the present world cataclysm in order to purge mankind of its base passions and to awaken it to the consciousness of God. The messages which Christ and other great Teachers have left us will surely bear abundant fruit. From the welter of bloodshed and chaos should surely evolve a new order of universal love and peace.

This is the time for all to bring before their mind the vision of Christ on the Cross. He died for the redemption of mankind. He showed that Spirit is greater than flesh and to live in the light of it is the true aim of life. He directed all souls aspiring to enter

the kingdom of the Spirit to lift up their hearts in sincere prayer to the indwelling and over-ruling God. May his words surcharged with divine love and grace enter deep into the hearts of men who are now engaged in acts of hate and destruction and transform their lives.

Christ is not merely a body as many of us believe. He is a symbol of cosmic Reality as all great Teachers are. He is an expression of the supreme Spirit. To reach him, to be inspired by him and to be guided by him is to be identified with him in Spirit. It is in the pure heart that he reveals himself. May Christ — the divine Spirit — pour his grace on the world and quell the fires of destruction that are raging in it! May his love prevail in the hearts of warring nations!

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

The attainment of God-realization is a gradual process. You have to progress from stage to stage before the goal is reached. The first step is strong aspiration which gives rise to concentration and purification. Then comes the inner vision and the resultant peace and bliss which leads to the full knowledge of the Reality. Next you achieve a state of all-comprehensive realization of Divinity in all aspects of existence. Ultimately, you get the experience of the mystic oneness and identity with God which baffles description.

Hence it must be understood by every aspirant that the path which takes him to the goal of spiritual perfection should be trodden upon with determination, steadiness and patience. The transformation that is sought to be brought about is of a tremendous nature. The animal and the human have to be changed into the Superhuman

and Divine. Unusual haste, uncontrolled impatience and impetuous zeal should be avoided.

Every human being, in whatever situation or circumstance he or she is placed, possesses the right to realise the highest spiritual status. What is needed is a fixed resolve, a sustained faith and an optimistic outlook when walking on the path. There may come moments of vacillation, uncertainty and even of despair. Here the aspirant should have recourse to the society of saints. Through their inspiration and guidance he should regain strength and assurance and march onward.

Just as the flower reveals its hidden grace and fragrance, so your soul unfolds its latent qualities of all-encompassing vision, eternal wisdom and infinite bliss by a natural evolutionary urge God has implanted within you.

Saints are beacons. Saints show the path. They hearten you in your struggle. Their words should carry absolute weight with you. They can awaken and enthuse you. But you have to advance on the path by your own growing inner power and will. You should feel conscious that the Divine within is your sole refuge. It is by the constant thought and meditation of Him that you rise from the lower to the higher planes of consciousness. When finally you are absorbed in Him, He manifests within you in all His beauty, power and glory.

DIVE DEEP WITHIN

Religion is the bedrock on which a true regeneration of mankind can be raised. But this religion should

bear all the marks of a universal conception, in strict accordance with the teachings of the great Masters from whose lips flowed the same wisdom and truth. Dogmatism, superstition and inconsistent traditions have today enveloped the pristine light of spiritual culture.

If we want to walk on the divine path, we ought to regulate the conduct of our life in such a way that we might gradually maintain in our hearts a consciousness of the great Truth dwelling in us and pervading everywhere. Useless frittering away of our energy, especially mental, must be avoided. The mind must be controlled. By a steady process of concentration on the great ideal alone, can we resist the attacks of worries and anxieties. Let us keep the goal of perfect peace dazzling in front of our mental vision. A deep introspection and a persevering attempt to enter into the higher and exalted consciousness of our being, will enable us to raise an invincible power within ourselves, so that we can wield the internal and external forces to our best advantage. Let us realise that we are the immortal and all-blissful Spirit, and not merely a body which is only an ephemeral mask assumed by the Spirit for its play. Let us dive deep within ourselves to know the secret and eternal Source of our existence. The way to success, peace and power, lies in this direction.

MEANING OF RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

Verily, Ramdas is only a child of God. As such he introduces himself to you. It was many, many years ago that God took him to Himself and gradually moulded and transformed his life into a new one, full of radiance, peace and bliss. Before Ramdas started on his

pilgrimage in the year 1922, he was actually feeling the presence of God within him. Still it may be said that it was in quest of God he was made to leave the place where he got this vision. To go in quest of God was really a strange thing to do for one who has been feeling the presence of God within him. It may be that God wanted Ramdas to see Him everywhere, to see pervading everywhere the same light, that he saw within him so that Ramdas can behold Him in the hearts of all beings and creatures in the world. It must have been with that object that God led him away from Mangalore and took him all over India, to the various Tirthas — places of pilgrimage — and brought him in contact with many saints and different kinds of people, in all of whom he saw only his Divine Beloved. Here his vision was so comprehensive, so enveloping and so all-pervading, that all distinction of caste, creed, colour or nationality disappeared completely and he saw his Beloved alone everywhere. He could feel the fellowship of the Beloved at every instant of his life. In this way he was taken round, just as a mother takes her child to see new things. God in His mysterious way controlled him and led him to these places and gave him the highest spiritual experiences, for which alone, it is now clear, he was taken out of Mangalore.

What are these experiences? They have been chronicled in the little book 'In Quest of God'. These experiences which God gave him were so integral and mysterious that it is difficult to lay before you everything that comes to his mind in relation to these deep experiences. We know that, before we can see the light of God and feel His presence, our minds must be perfectly pure. Purity is the foundation on which the

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spiritual structure can be built. Purity consists in freeing our minds of all low and animal desires. Lust, greed and wrath must completely disappear from our minds. We must become absolutely pure in thought, word and deed. Our life must be illumined with the divine consciousness, our hearts must flow out in love towards all beings in the world, and our actions must be the spontaneous out-flow of the divine power within us for the relief of the distressed and suffering humanity. These conditions have to be fulfilled before we can become God's own. God will claim us only when we are fit instruments in His hands for bringing about peace and harmony in the world.

But how is this inner purity and the consequent out-flow of love made possible? This is not possible unless we get God's grace. Our whole life is centred on grace. If we want to be illumined, if we want to be purified, if we want to be elevated and surcharged with divine peace, then it is for His grace that we should pray, and not for anything else — only for His grace, so that He may lead us on the right path and prescribe to us the ways and means by which we can purify ourselves and be ultimately fit to be His servants — true servants.

Just before Ramdas realised God's presence within him, he was made to pass through very severe discipline. His heart day and night cried for Him and his prayer was for His light alone. When He did not reveal Himself even after Ramdas' struggle for some time, Ramdas became restless, disconsolate and miserable. All attractions of the world ceased to have any influence on him when that cry started in his heart, and until it was fulfilled he was an obstinate child of God. He did not

have anything to do with the world. He was praying day and night chanting His name.

His name was the only refuge in his life. The Name gave him strength and enabled him to successfully overcome all temptations in the world. His name seems to be simple, but it is full of potency. It has got wonderful power. It is rightly said that His name and He are not different. God and His name are really one. If we take refuge in His name it is as good as our having taken refuge in Him. Name is the link between us and God. Through the Name it is that we can feel His nearness. When we take His name, He is with us. When our friend or a relative is far away and we utter his name, we feel our nearness to him. So also, if we take God's name we feel His presence with us. God made Ramdas take His name constantly and purified his heart.

Unless our heart is pure, God will not reveal Himself to us. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". Purity is essential. We cannot be considered servants of God unless we are absolutely pure. Many persons start the work of serving others, but they have the consciousness that *they* are doing everything. Thus service becomes egoistic and contaminated. Instead of its becoming service it becomes disservice. We must surrender our will completely to His will and feel that we are His mere servants, obeying His commands and acting according to His will. Then alone we render true and real service and God reveals Himself to us in all His splendour. Thereafter He guides us in every act of ours and we never go astray. He does not allow us to slip, because our heart is ever attuned to Him.

It should not be that we pray to Him some time

and forget Him afterwards. We must have a continuous stream of His remembrance running in our mind. Let us pray to Him intensely for a few minutes, with the effect that He is in our thoughts for all the twenty-four hours. We shall then be able to make others really happy. Making others happy is possible only when we have gained happiness ourselves. So also we can give peace to others only when we have it ourselves. We must stay our mind on God through constant remembrance. Then darkness within us will disappear and God's light will dawn therein and every part of our body will be illumined with this light and we shall become the embodiment of divine light and peace. Then we shall be able to radiate peace and joy wherever we go. Whoever comes in contact with us will be inspired, his heart awakened to the awareness of the great Truth — God, and his life will take the right turn — the turn towards Him.

Let us live this life, the great and glorious life that God has granted us, not for enjoying the sense-pleasures like animals, but for raising it to the consciousness of the Divine. Let us live, move and have our being in Him. Then it is that we become fit instruments in God's hands and a great blessing to humanity. We shall then create a real fellowship among all people, bring them together and make them rise above all man-made distinctions and divisions. We shall have inner harmony and peace and the same will be reflected in the hearts of our fellow-beings. The world is now in a state of discord because we have forgotten the great Lord who dwells in everyone of us. If we are only conscious of Him, there will be no scope for discord, disharmony, or war in this world. We shall love, help

and serve each other, giving up all differences which are born of ignorance.

One thing is essential for realising God. It is the company of saints — godly souls. It is rightly said that a soul alone can kindle another soul. By reading books we cannot get that enlightenment which we get by the contact of realised souls. Therefore, a communion of souls is necessary in which we contact those who have evolved to a higher state of consciousness and we feel the divine radiance and peace. Those who have attained divine peace can freely share it with others.

So let us contact saints as much as possible and sit before them in a prayerful mood and see how our heart is filled with love and joy. The heart is the seat of God. When we are united together in the name of God and for the sake of God and His service, we shall know that we are not different or separate in Spirit from the people around us. When we sit together to pray, to think of God, or discuss about doing anything for the service of the distressed, we bring ourselves nearer to God. Even when we sit alone by ourselves for prayer, we must feel we are one with the entire humanity. Humanity outside appears to be so many different forms, composed of so many different persons, but in reality there is only one Atman, all-pervading, of which all these forms are the expressions. "Love thy neighbour as thyself." How is this possible? Yes, only when we have experienced that the Atman within us and within our neighbour is the same. If we realise this truth, it is so easy to love others as we do ourselves.

This is the way how we can truly love another. Without this inner vision, it is not possible. On the physical plane, we love another because he happens to

Let our son, brother or father, or any other person relating to the flesh. If we are in tune with the Spirit, we cannot help loving everybody, as we then feel one with all fellow-beings.

When Mother Krishnabai in the Ashram is asked why she is taking so much care of dirty children by giving them bath, clothing and food, she replies that her body and the bodies of the children are not different. Just as she washes herself, she washes the children also. Ramdas remembers these words of the Mother: "Every body is my body. Every one's hunger is my hunger. Every one's suffering is my suffering." If we develop this consciousness, how do we live and act? We act spontaneously, because that vision makes us act so. We cannot be happy unless we make others happy. In truth, there is no 'other', though apparently there is. We cannot avoid this expression when we speak on the relative plane.

This is the true conception of spiritual unity. Such a life alone can give us real peace. As a man grows more and more selfish, he becomes more and more miserable. As he grows less and less selfish, he becomes more and more happy. When he is absolutely free from selfishness, he is supremely happy, and radiates love and joy in the world like the sun shining on all alike. He does so without the consciousness that he is so doing — that he is spreading peace. He says it is God who does everything. It becomes his very nature to be kind and loving, to be compassionate and serviceable to everybody. In other words, his nature will be such that, in that state, he will spontaneously love, help and serve all.

If the sun were asked why he is giving light, if he

could speak to us, he would answer that it is his nature to do so.' Is he giving it for the good of the world? He may say he does not know. We must be like the sun in the heavens and the flower in the garden that spreads fragrance. This is the purpose of human life. Every atom of our being should thrill to the symphony of divine joy and peace.

MESSAGE TO THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

Ramdas is in full accord with the aims and objects of the Parliament of Religions and wishes the organisers every success in their laudable endeavour.

Ramdas is a believer in the unity and harmony of faiths. Before the consciousness of religious unity can be established, mankind has to rise above the narrow sectarian bias of the existing religions in the world. Each religion is indeed great in its own way, founded as it is by a divine personality. Fundamentally, the teachings of all the great Prophets of the world are the same. A Parliament of Religions provides the best platform to bring out and stress this basic unity by presenting the teachings of all the Prophets and Saints of the world in their pristine purity and glory. Every effort made to accentuate the differences, that exist on the surface between the denominational religions, has to be discouraged and eliminated before the consciousness of world-unity can be established.

Ramdas notes that one of the objects with which the Parliament of religions is held is to inculcate in the modern mind a truly universal outlook and promote the ideals of universal love, brotherhood and international fellow-feeling in order to bring about world-solidarity.

and peace. The disappearance of the war-mentality which threatens human life and civilization today is solely dependent on the dawn of the consciousness of Divinity in man. It is only the knowledge of the Divine that will elevate man from the animal to the spiritual status. On the plane of the Spirit there ever rules peace and harmony. To infuse into our life the light of the Spirit and to adjust our conduct to our fellowmen accordingly, is what constitutes the real establishment of peace-consciousness in the world.

Wars break out in the world only because of the ignorance, pride and selfishness of people who prefer to remain in their own narrow cages, unwilling to take a leap into the immortalising sea of Divine Life. Love limited to one's country, loyalty confined to one's race, religion or community, attachment to one's family and identification with one's body are all alike the offspring of ignorance which confines us in a cage of a smaller or a bigger dimension. To fling one's life into the infinite expanse of the Divine is the work of heroes. Happily, today, Mother Earth may be proud of Her heroic sons and daughters of the East and the West, who boldly proclaim that the world is their home and all beings in it are their brethren.

Immortality is the birthright of all. Divine consciousness is the most precious heritage of mankind. Life at the source is universal, free from all limitations. The teachings of the ancient Rishis clearly show that ignorance of the one all-pervading Truth, whose nature is pure Bliss, is the root cause of fear, strife and misery. International conflicts, religious wrangles, social injustice, economic exploitation and political tyranny are all found, in the ultimate analysis, to spring from selfish-

ness born of the failure to realise the unity and universality of the Spirit. When the darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the light of knowledge, one cannot but exclaim in a state of exalted consciousness:

"The great Spirit that lives and moves in me is also animating and activating all beings and creatures of the universe. For me racial, national and sectarian distinctions have no significance. I belong to the world. I feel for all, I love all and I cheerfully sacrifice my time, energy and thought for the service of all. National boundaries do not exist in my universal life and consciousness. I am not a member of any particular church, creed, cult or religion. My God is as much the light, power and joy of my soul as He is of every one in the world — be he a Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Jew or Gentile. Love is the light and glory of my soul, which is one with the soul of the universe."

All World Teachers unanimously declare: "O man, if you want peace for yourself and for others in the world, adjust your conduct in accordance with the law of love dictated by the Cosmic Spirit. Expand your vision so that it can embrace all fellow-beings and link them to yourself by love, sympathy and goodwill. Rise above all narrow creeds, sectarian cults, communal leanings and national ambitions. Merge your life into the infinity of God's own existence."

May the Almighty Spirit, the supreme Ruler of the universe, awaken in the heart of mankind the consciousness of world-unity and brotherhood, based on an attitude of equality towards the different religions, accepting all the Prophets, Saints and Sages alike as His representatives on earth!

A VISION OF SRI KRISHNA

There was a Vision — Bala Krishna was seen dancing, playing upon His flute. He was slender, blue in colour. Except for an yellowish cloth, worn round his waist, He was bare of clothing. On His neck was hanging a string of pearls and a Vajrayanthi garland. His head was adorned with a crown of gold, set with gems. His black curls of hair were falling over His shoulders from beneath the crown. There were gold bracelets on His arms and gold belt set with gems round His upper arms. The flute was of gold and at both ends of it were hanging clusters of pearls, strung on red silk thread. His ankles were adorned with anklets made of gold.

His face—Sri Krishna's face! There was a heavenly glow upon it. The eyes — oh, the look of them was simply bewitching, enchanting! The lips — those sweet, charming lips were smiling; oh, what a smile! — a smile that can draw to Him all the worlds. His cheeks — oh, how soft and radiant were those cheeks! The reflection of those enchanting eyes and of the smile of those charming lips were dancing on those lovely cheeks. Those half-opened blood-red lips were revealing the finest set of milk-white teeth. Those beautiful ears were decked with rings and pendants set in diamonds, emeralds and rubies.

What a gait, when Sri Krishna danced! He was swimming in the air. Oh, the sweetness of the music that was coming out of that blessed flute! It sent thrills after thrills of unutterable bliss into the soul of the hearer. Altogether He was a veritable personification of the most heavenly music. Ecstasy, bliss and love seemed to have assumed human form. His well-shaped small feet were dancing, keeping time with the eternal

music of His magic flute.

Oh! — what a sight! The very gods might envy such a sight! Glorious, glorious, indeed, is Thy play, O Krishna!

IMPORTANCE OF DEEPAVALI

Deepavali is a festival of lights. It is observed in commemoration of the triumph of the Divine Power over the force of darkness, as represented by Sri Krishna's killing of Narakasura. Sri Krishna stands for the supreme Lord of the universe and the Asura for an embodiment of demoniac power that seeks to overcome the world.

What is said to have happened on the external plane of the world is also true in the internal life of all beings. When we are under the control of the lower forces of our nature, such as lust, greed and wrath, we dwell veritably in a self-created hell, *Naraka*. If we wish to conquer these evils, we should become aware of the hidden light and power of the Divine within us.

When our life is attuned to the Cosmic Reality, God, we are lifted from the life of the senses into a consciousness which is imbued with immortal purity, bliss and peace. It is now that we realise our true and everlasting life and nature.

So the real observance of Deepavali must be for us a transmutation of a life under the thralldom of the senses to a life liberated from all bondage born of ignorance. We should then not only be a light unto ourselves, but also a light to all others around us. We not only experience an ineffable joy ourselves, but also radiate that joy to others. We become then a flaming

instrument, a luminous vehicle, in whom the Divine expresses Himself in all His sublimity.

What is needed in order to reveal the inherent divine qualities within us is that we should achieve perfect purity — an essential requisite. Purity is the foundation on which the structure of a dedicated life can be raised.

Ill-will, hate, jealousy and vindictiveness should be eradicated completely from our minds. They should be replaced by compassion, forgiveness, sympathy and spontaneous service. God — the radiant Being — is the supreme Deity of our hearts. He is the One dwelling in all beings and creatures. Hence, to love Him is to love all beings. We approach Him simultaneously, both inwardly and outwardly. By extending our love towards all beings, we automatically draw our vision inward for the realisation of Him within. On the other hand, when we strive to see Him within, our outward life too automatically flows in streams of love and affection towards all. In the last analysis of the spiritual attainment, the inner and outer aspects of life coalesce into one supreme indivisible Truth in which all distinction between the outer and inner vision and experience is completely sublimated.

When the Jnani-Bhakta gets this mystic experience, he cries out through excess of spiritual ecstasy — "All is God and there is nothing but God." He rises now beyond the so-called life and death, knowledge and ignorance, and all other pairs of opposites, all the conditions of a relative life. He stands at the apex wherefrom he sees all the worlds as one complete, undivided, all-inclusive and all-transcendent whole.

This is the aim of human life. The word *Dēepavali*,

pregnant with the meaning described above, should be a magic word that should bring to our hearts the eternal Light that never fades, the eternal Joy that never fails, the eternal Peace that never wanes.

WITNESS OF THE WORLD-PLAY

If we examine, with a close and clarified vision, the events that happen in the world, with regard to ourselves and others, we cannot but perceive that a mysterious Power, which cannot be grasped by the intellect, and which is beyond the petty calculations of the human mind, is adjusting and determining all the things around us. Man, in his arrogance, denies the suzerainty of this supreme Power; nay, sometimes he denies Its very existence.

In spite of repeated experiences of abject failure and woeful frustration of his plans, man still does not recognise God as the one great ruler of the universe. In his ignorance, he is an obstinate creature, and blunders at every step, receiving repeated knocks and blows. Surely, these knocks and blows that come to him are for his good; the more he gets them, the better for him. Because, they tend to drive out of him the ignorance that has obsessed his soul. Blessed is he who is beset with sufferings and misfortunes, for they open his eyes and lead him to the reality of his immortal existence.

God teaches us the great truth that He is seated in the hearts of all beings. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, in the Gita: "The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, by His illusive Maya or power causing all things to revolve, as though mounted on a wheel." God is the one, formless, changeless, everlasting Reality. He is the

only Truth. The worlds we see are nothing but the fleeting forms assumed by Him for His Lila or cosmic play. He it is who, through His Maya, has taken the form of the innumerable bodies of beings and things in these worlds. He it is who moves, moulds and revolves every being and thing according to His omnipotent will or *Shakti*. The shadowy forms are unreal and perishable. They come and go. They appear and disappear. Beings act in the world in various ways as actors do in a drama, for the appointed time only, as prompted by God who is the Sutradhari. They all dance according to His will, while all the time He remains the dispassionate witness of His own play, ever free and peaceful.

When we say that we are suffering or that we are happy, it is really He who makes us say so. For He is residing within us. This talk of misery or joy belongs only to His play and acting. He is always above all dualities, above birth and death, pleasure and pain, good and bad, honour and dishonour, likes and dislikes, success and failure, gain and loss, friend and foe, etc., etc. This Lila is played by Him through the aid of His own Maya or Prakriti of the three Gunas — Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. The Eternal One Himself chose to be many. In all these multifarious forms, He pretends to be affected by the pairs of Dwandwas or opposites mentioned above. In fact, the Supreme Lord — who pervades the whole universe — is Trigunatita, is Dwandwatita, is ever pure, free, untouched and eternal. He is enacting this Lila or world-play only to enjoy everlasting bliss as a witness of it.

THE SIMPLE WAY

Religion is not a subject for discussion, much less for speculation. Religion means re-union of the soul with the Lord. It signifies the intimate relationship between the two. This relationship develops into an uninterrupted communion with Him. Such communion and the resultant purity and peace can be had by anybody and at any place.

God wants us to be pure in heart. It is only then we can see Him and realise Him. He does not mind whether we go to this church or that, this temple or that, whether we belong to any particular creed, society or organisation. What He wants is a heart longing for Him alone. So it is an individual concern. God is open to all. He is like the free air which all can breathe. His presence can be felt everywhere, whether it be in the church, temple, market place, office, caves or jungles.

God is the Beloved of our heart. The condition to be fulfilled before we can have Him is the attainment of a guileless, pure and innocent nature. Only when His grace flows into our life, we are transfigured. He should accept us and we are saved. This is the simple way to have Him. Theology and philosophy are big things for those who are wise and learned.

THE AIM OF ALL RELIGIONS

The aim of all religions is to point out the path that leads to perfect freedom, peace and joy. This blessed state can be realised only by the eradication of the ego-sense through surrender to God.

Divine life should flow through us, divine love should dwell in our hearts, and divine light should

inspire all our activities. Therefore our heart should be attuned to His love, our intellect be illumined with His wisdom and our body be worked at His will. This is the goal of human life.

To teach this great truth came Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed. They declare in one voice that we can reveal the hidden Divinity in us by resigning ourselves to Him totally and dedicating our life to His service.

Mere intellectual understanding of religious truths is different from actual spiritual experience which is a matter of intimate relationship between the soul and God.

It must be understood that to love and serve God is to love and serve all beings and creatures. To realise God is to be conscious of His presence everywhere. Wherever you turn, there is His light, power and glory.

Spiritual discipline which a man performs under the inspiration of the Divine can alone purify him and make him aware of the immortal Spirit which is God. All else is, as the saying goes, 'sheer vanity and vexation.'

Let us live and act as He wills for the universal good. Verily, to love and serve all constitutes true enlightenment, liberation and peace — this is the loftiest achievement.

THE AIM OF EDUCATION

Education is an important factor in the evolution of human life. It helps us to regulate our lives and make ourselves useful to our fellow-beings. The purpose of schools and colleges should be to impart education not merely for the development of the intellect, but

also for the enlargement of the heart. As it is, the aim of education seems to be only to pass examinations with distinction and hold degrees.

Ramdas may quote here a famous line from the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. He says, "Education is the unfoldment of the perfection which is already in man." Life should unfold itself for revealing its inherent glory through the cultivation of the highest virtues that elevate it, through the right kind of education and culture. Life and all its activities should bear witness to the great Truth which is at the basis of it. It should reflect divine light in all its expressions. While the intellect is filled with true wisdom, the heart must respond to the finest feelings of compassion, forgiveness and kindness towards all beings in the world. The heart should be our guide, and intellect should fulfil the ideals which the heart sets before us.

To achieve this end, a power beyond the heart and mind should be called in to regulate their activities. There should not be any clash between heart and intellect. From the harmony between the two proceeds right action. God must illumine our intellect and purify our heart so that our life may be spiritualised in all its aspects. So education should be all round in its character and it should bring about a transformation in us from the sheer human to the Supreme Divine. This can be possible only when we draw inspiration from God in all that we do. He is our master and guide as He is also the great controller of the worlds.

• Education should enable us to live for the good of others by making us shed our selfish tendencies which are responsible for so much unhappiness and discord in the world. All the God-given gifts should be utilised

for the service of the needy and the distressed. This is the one great purpose with which we are born as human beings.

In schools and colleges, children and young folk should be taught to control the mind and harmonise it on one side with the Divine Spirit within, and on the other with all our fellow-beings. Service should be the motto of life — service done in the name and for the sake of God.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches us that we should not give up action, but divinise it. The Gita should be taught in all schools and colleges, and students should be made to study and practise the teachings of this great scripture.

SOME THOUGHTS ON EVOLUTION

Evolution is a progressive change in Nature from the lowest to the highest manifestation of life. God is the great Master of evolution. It is by His will and power that changes occur in the plane of natural phenomena. Life from the lowest strata moves upward to higher and higher forms until it reaches the all-transcendent and omnipresent Truth or God.

Mother Nature, inhering in the tiniest object, progresses in an ascending scale. From rock and mineral to the plant, from plant to the tiny animal species, from the lower animal species to the higher animal species, from the animal to the human, from the human to the Divine — that is the course of evolution. The life-principle of existence progresses onward by the force of a natural inner urge. It is the urge for self-expression, for self-fulfilment.

In the physical plane, the change takes place through integration and disintegration, both of which tend to raise the form and inner structure and quality of things into higher and higher forms and states. It is a mechanical process, as here the life-principle is not clearly manifest. In the lower orders of life, again, it is an unconscious change, which goes on naturally and spontaneously without the life-principle being fully aware of itself or the change. It is an unconscious evolution. There is no conscious aspiration felt, or deliberate will at work, for effecting the change. Tamas is so strong and dense at this strata that the life-principle is covered over by a deep layer of ignorance and it does not know itself, its relation with other objects, nor its relationship with its environment, the world. It is more or less a blind or dumb movement. It is a groping from darkness to light. The course is long and indefinite. The end is far, far away.

In the human plane also, up to a certain stage, until the inner spirit awakens, the unconscious evolution continues more or less as a natural phenomenon, without the participator in the evolution being fully cognisant of the upward trend. The human being stands, as it were, at the apex of the curve at the parting of the ways. He can either shoot up like a rocket to the ultimate goal of God-realisation, or go down the road again to the lower orders of life. If he is spiritually awakened, he will surely move forward. Thereafter, he uses all his powers of intelligence, emotion and action to secure liberation from the thralldom of the flesh, senses, and the mind, and experiences the state of utter freedom, peace and bliss through identification with the Universal Spirit.

If, instead of getting spiritually awakened, the human being remains unregenerate, with his life limited largely to the sense-world, and lives only for satisfying his sensual desires, he is no more than a biped, an animal possessing a human body. And, oftentimes, he proves to be worse than an animal. For, whatever intelligence he is gifted with, which the lower animals cannot boast of, he uses solely for selfish ends in a most dangerous and destructive way. Such people are the Asuras, men of hate and violence. They are not aware of their divine inner Spirit. They dwell in the darkness of ignorance, identifying themselves with the body, slaves of their lower passions. They live a degraded life and by their acts are often hurled back into the wombs of animals. As Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, "Swayed by egotism, intoxicated by power, conceit, anger and lust, these envious fools hate Me in their own and others' bodies. These cruel monsters, the worst of men who indulge in evil-doing, I throw into Asuric wombs. Entering the lower orders of life, these deluded ones fall further down the ladder of life in birth after birth without reaching Me." (Chapter XVI verses 18 to 20)

Thus their evolution is cut short, indefinitely delayed. Such souls fall from their human status into animalhood again, due to their bad Karma. But the same intelligence which, when abused for selfish ends, leads to retrogression, can, as it must, be employed to develop the higher human qualities which help to advance evolution rapidly to the supreme goal of life, the end and aim of all progress and evolution, namely, realisation of God or Self. In the language of the Gita, these are the Daivic qualities which free the soul from the bondage of Nature, while the Asuric qualities bind

the soul more firmly with the chains of matter or Prakriti.

Here then comes the great turning point in the life of a human being. It is the conscious change over from a life of the senses to that of the Spirit. Nature was allowed so far to have Her way all along to work unconsciously. Now, in the awakened human being, who had his rebirth into the life of the Spirit, Nature assumes a new role to help the individual in the path of evolution. She transforms Herself from Avidya Shakti to Vidya Shakti, from a power of ignorance to a power of enlightenment. Hitherto, evolution progressed in the lower strata of life by the method of aggression, making for the survival of the individual as the fittest in the struggle for existence. The instincts of hunger and sex, the desire to eat, enjoy, expend and possess at the cost of others, played the dominant part. Now, as a result of repeated experience, the awareness slowly dawns in the individual of the value of association, friendship and mutual help in the place of fierce competition, rivalry and exploitation or devouring of the weaker creatures. The need for love, fellow-feeling, sympathy, tenderness, affection, giving up of possessions and the gentler qualities in general, is realised in the higher enlightened interest of the individual himself. Henceforth evolution marches rapidly along the spiritual path of love, service and self-sacrifice. The limitations of individual life, the dependence of the individual on others, nay, his identity with the Universal, is discovered and ultimately realised.

Now, Mother Nature gives the human being a new orientation, a new light, and a new law of progress towards the final goal. This receives sanction also from God, who is the Master of Nature in both Her lower and

higher forms. When God comes down, as it were, to guide and lead the awakened individual to Himself, we say grace has come to the struggling soul like cool rain that falls on the dry, parched and thirsting earth. Now, attainment of the goal is assured. The pull from God, helped by Vidya Shakti or Higher Nature, and the force of the individual's inner aspiration, all combine to quicken the pace of evolution and bring about a complete transformation of the human into the Divine.

Here it must be remembered that everything in the universe, all the animate and inanimate things, have manifested from the Divine and are ultimately destined to return to the Divine. This is exactly what evolution helps the individual to achieve by making him to pass from stage to stage, through various forms and expressions of the Divine Himself, as manifested in the various objects and beings in the universe. The Divine is there at the start, at the middle and end of the path.

We have come from God and so we must return to Him. Human life is a precious asset which we have gained after ages of struggle. In this life it is possible to complete the cycle of evolution and realise that supreme state of absolute freedom and bliss, which is the sole ambition of all lives. To rise above the animal life, to rise above the human, to fill the mind and senses with divine light and peace, nay, to transform the entire life into the radiant and blissful manifestation of the Divine, to merge individual life in the universal consciousness, to see all the world as one's own form and expression, to transcend all dualities of the relative planes of existence, to reach the Absolute and know that we are That itself and there is nothing besides — this is the great blessing which human life confers on us. By that

we become God Himself.

NEED FOR SELFLESS SERVICE

An Ashram, we have to remember, is founded on the motto of Universal Love and Service. Impersonality is the keynote of its mission. Selfless souls join together and, bringing down the divine power to work in them, become instruments for His service. Surely, then, God's power alone lies at the basis of such corporate activity.

An Ashram ministry can be compared to a machine, whose parts are held together by bolts and nuts, i.e., by the individuals that form it. If a bolt gets rusty, the manipulator of the machine, finding it unfit, removes that part and replaces it by a new one. So, whenever any individual, forgetting that he is merely an instrument in the hands of God for His service, gets contaminated by conceit and pride, God in His own mysterious way brings about his severance from the ministry. New individuals or instruments are instantly fitted into the gaps, and His service continues as enthusiastically as ever. Each one has to understand that he is not indispensable. The moment he submits to the ego and its unbridled passions, God throws him aside as unfit for His service. He will certainly be given, in due course, a turn again to rise and become His true servant.

Do not find fault with anybody in the world; because each one is acting from his or her own standpoint, which each one holds to be true. It must not be forgotten that, whenever anybody sits in judgment on others and passes strictures on them, he is doing so, being conscious only as an individual or an ego. "I am right and the others are wrong" is the attitude of one

who is wilfully denying, or is totally oblivious of, the principle of a selfless or impersonal life. Ego is a wonderful thing. It always asserts that it is a faultless paragon of virtue and goodness, while the whole world is full of error and wrong.

Man, however wise, when he falls into the clutches of the ego and poses himself to be superior, clever and great, deliberately makes himself unworthy of a great cause. True is the saying that man rises by his own strength and falls by his own weakness. Strength is gained by communion with God, and weakness comes through subjection to the ego. Freedom is not license, but service. Independence is not arrogance, but responsibility.

The world is indeed a school of experience. By continuous friction with it we learn where we stand and what we are. Since the Almighty Power is at the inception of the Ashram service, it stands or falls only by His supreme will. If He wills it, in spite of us all, He can break it into pieces. On the other hand, if He wills to make it go stronger than ever, none of us, puny mortals, can pull it down, however much we might try.

May His will ever prevail! May He shower His grace on all His selfless instruments and guide them in such a manner as not to fall into the grip of the lower self!

ON TEMPLE WORSHIP

Ramdas feels that it is necessary to explain the meaning and purpose of temples, in which an image is installed as a symbol of God. Man cannot conceive of God, who is infinite and eternal. God is beyond name

and form. The instrument, which we have to make use of, in trying to comprehend Him, is the mind. And the mind can think only in terms of name and form. So, if we want to concentrate our mind on God, we have to give Him a name and a form. The image in the temple serves this purpose. When we stand before the image, we take it as the very embodiment of the Divine. We sing before it of His great attributes, His infinite glory and power, His eternal existence, knowledge and joy.

The image, by itself, is only a mere idol, made of metal, wood or stone. But the consecratory ceremonies at the time of the installation of the idol, invest it with divine powers. The sanctity of a temple largely depends upon the faith, purity and devotion of the priests who perform daily worship in it. The Mantras that are recited during the Puja are also charged with spiritual power. They create an atmosphere vibrant with peace and purity. So all these combine to make one conscious of the divine presence in the temple, and instil faith in the devotee. When thousands thus fix their faith upon that image, it naturally adds to the divine light and power generated therein. And the moment anybody, with faith in the Divinity installed there, enters the temple, he feels this very clearly. So temples have become places of worship for the masses, in general, who are not yet fit to turn inwards and find the God within their own hearts, in His true and eternal nature.

All should have free access to a temple, no matter to what caste they belong. But the holy atmosphere in the temple should not be defiled. The sanctity of the temple can be preserved only by the faith and devotion both of the priests and of the people who offer worship.

there. People must go to the temple only for worship. The principal qualification for worship in the temple is staunch faith in and devotion for the Deity. In the precincts of the temple, devotees are expected to be physically clean, and to preserve that decorum and attitude of mind which is suited to the Presence of God.

As an instance of how one can realise the presence of God even in an object most despised in the eyes of a human being, Ramdas may here relate a story. The Emperor Akbar had a Hindu minister named Birbal. Akbar was well versed in the Hindu religious scriptures. Therein he had read that God was an all-pervading Reality. In order to be convinced of this truth, one day, he asked Birbal, "Is it true that, according to the Hindu belief, God is pervading everywhere?" Birbal said, "Yes!" "Can you prove it to me?", asked Akbar. "Certainly, I can," was the reply. Then Akbar asked a servant to get an old, worn out slipper of his queen from the *harem*, and, handing it over to Birbal, said: "Here you are! Now, prove to me that God resides in this slipper."

Birbal agreed to do so on condition that the Emperor granted him six months' leave and a few lakhs of rupees. The Emperor gave him what he wanted. Soon after, Birbal purchased some land on the outskirts of the city and erected a huge Mahadeva's temple on it, in which he installed an image of Lord Shiva, — the Shiva Linga — and consecrated it with the help of learned priests. Thereafter started the regular Puja according to Shastric rules in the temple. It went on for a few months and the fame of the temple spread far and wide. People thronged to the temple at the time of the Puja and made offerings to the Deity with great devotion. Those who

were suffering from diseases, or were suffering from other troubles, made vows to the Deity for relief. And on account of their faith, their prayers were heard. In two or three months, the fame of the temple was well established.

The period set for the fulfilment of the agreement between the Emperor and Birbal was also nearing its end. Now a strange thing happened. The Emperor was attacked with a severe colic, and even the most eminent *hakims* and *vaidyas* in the empire could not cure it. The Emperor's suffering was very great. Now, a Hindu well-wisher of the Emperor went up to him and told him of the great power possessed by the Deity of the temple recently founded near the city and of the cures effected by offering worship to Him. He suggested that if Akbar made a vow with faith in the Deity, he also would get relief. The Emperor at once agreed, sent for Birbal and expressed his wish to attend the Puja at the temple with the object of getting cured of his pain.

Accordingly, Birbal arranged for a grand celebration in the temple, news of which reached all the people of the State. A large concourse assembled in the temple precincts. The Emperor went in a procession, accompanied by thousands of his subjects, including Muslims. In the presence of the Emperor, the Puja was performed in the Vedic style and, after it was over, the Pujari was asked to give the Emperor the *Abhisheka tirtha*—the holy water in which the deity was bathed—which the Emperor received in all humility and drank. The miracle happened instantaneously. Akbar became free from the colic. Then he exclaimed, "There is no doubt God is present here. The image is certainly full

of the power of God." Birbal then asked the chief priest to remove the cover of the image, which was hollow. As he did so, inside the cavity, there was lying the old, worn out slipper of the queen, which Birbal had received from the Emperor about six months back. Birbal said: "Look here now, your Majesty! What was the power that cured you of your malady? Was it not the divine power residing in this slipper?"

Akbar was now convinced and amply rewarded his minister with rich presents.

GLOSSARY

Ahimsa	.. Non-violence
Ashram	.. Hermitage or abode of a saint
Ashramite	.. Inmate of an Ashram
Asura	.. Demon
Asuric	.. Demoniac
Atman	.. Self
Avatar	.. Incarnation of God
Avidya	.. Ignorance
Bhajan	.. Singing hymns
Bhakta	.. Devotee
Bhramara	.. A large black bee
Brahman	.. Impersonal God
Daivic	.. Divine
Darshan	.. Visit or vision
Deva	.. Celestial being
Dwandwatita	.. One who is above the pairs of opposites such as pleasure & pain, etc.
Guru	.. Spiritual teacher
Jiva	.. Individual soul
Jnani	.. Self-realized soul
Karma	.. Action
Kripa	.. Grace
Lila	.. Play

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THE DIVINE LIFE.

Mahadeva	.. One of the Gods of the Hindu Trinity
Maharshi	.. Great sage
Mahatma	.. Great soul
Mantra	.. Incantation
Maya	.. Illusive power of God
Nama-Likhi-Japa-Yajna	.. Writing Ramnam as an act of worship
Nirguna-Brahman	.. Impersonal God
Para-bhakti	.. Supreme devotion attainable after Self-knowledge
Prakriti	.. Nature
Puja	.. Worship
Pujari	.. One who performs worship
Purushottama	.. Supreme Godhead
Rajas	.. The quality of action
Rajasic	.. Pertaining to Rajas
Ram Mantra	.. Incantation of Ram's Name
Ramnam	.. Name of Ram
Rishis	.. Sages
Sadhaka	.. Seeker after Truth
Sadhana	.. Spiritual discipline
Sadhu	.. Saint
Sagun-Darshan	.. Vision of Personal God
Samrajya	.. Sovereignty
Samsara	.. World or cycle of births and deaths
Sannyas	.. Renunciation of worldly life
Sannyasin	.. One who has renounced the world for realizing God
Satsang	.. Association with saints

Satwa or Satwa	..	Quality of harmony
Guna	..	God's power
Shakti	..	Pertaining to the scriptures
Shastric	..	One of the Gods of the Hindu Trinity
Shiva	..	The fourth caste of the Hindu social order — serving class
Shudra	..	A sage
Siddha	..	Holder of strings
Sutradhar	..	Quality of dullness, delusion and darkness
Tamas	..	Pertaining to Tamas
Tamasic	..	One who is above the three Gunas — Satwa, Rajas & Tamas
Trigunatita	..	Physician
Vaidya	..	A garland worn by Lord Vishnu
Vaijyanthi	..	Pertaining to the Vedas
Vedic	..	A manifestation of divine power
Vibhuti	..	Spiritual knowledge
Vidya	..	Union with God
Yoga	..	One who has become one with God
Yogi	..	



